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MOSCOW UNMASKED

# Moscow Unmasked

## A Record of Nine Years' Work and Observation in Soviet Russia

By

Joseph Douillet

Late Belgian Consul in Russia; Member of Professor F. Nansen's Mission to Russia; Plenipotentiary of the Mission for South-East Russia; Representative of the European Students' Relief in Rostov-on-Don and Representative of many other International Organisations for the Relief of Famine in Russia.

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# FOREWORD

AT THE PRESENT TIME, WHEN THE TRUTH ABOUT Communism has become manifest to the best brains in Europe, it is particularly necessary and interesting to have the fullest and most precise information as to what is happening in Russia, the only country in which Communism has succeeded in seizing power and where the so-called "Communist earthly paradise" has been established.

The object of this book is to sum up what Communism has given to that country during the ten years of its rule and to consider to what state it has brought the country by the practical application of Communist doctrines.

Much European literature in the last few years has been devoted to the study of conditions in Soviet Russia. Delegations of foreign workmen, party groups representing the workers' interests, and journalists who have been sent out by the big organs of the world's press have reported on their visits; and there have been descriptions, impressions, and conclusions by private travellers who have visited Soviet Russia on their own accord. The authors of these works represent all classes of society as well as every shade of political opinion, and the conclusions they have drawn about Soviet Russia are equally varied. But a difference exists, not only in their political opinions and their social status, but also in the principal sense for the purpose of this matter, i.e. their judgment upon Soviet Russia. Some authors eulogise the Soviet *régime* and sing hymns of praise to Communism and its achievements, others write of tyranny which is

rampant in the Soviet union, the appalling conditions of life prevailing in this "earthly paradise," and so on.

It is therefore particularly difficult for those interested in Russia to form a definite opinion as to what is actually taking place under the Soviet *régime ;* and the difficulty is emphasised when conservative-minded people who, in view of their position, are unlikely to share Communistic ideas certify to Soviet achievements they have themselves witnessed, and, on the other hand, when workmen-socialists testify to the suppression of liberty in U.S.S.R. and the terrible, unbearable conditions of life experienced by the people under the Communist yoke.

These contradictions can only be explained by the fact that when the Soviet Government invites foreigners to come and "study" U.S.S.R. it does not allow them to do so independently, but only with the guidance of an open or hidden, secret and specially trained *cicerone* who is kindly placed at their disposal.

Soviet Russia is being "shown" and only that which beforehand has been prepared, cleaned, and tidied for the inspection of the foreign visitor.

Subsequently I shall adduce numerous proofs to confirm this statement.

The reason why persons who, like Cæsar's wife, are "beyond suspicion" in the sense of sympathy for Communism quite frankly relate and testify to what they have seen in U.S.S.R. is easily understood.

Their favourable testimony to the Soviet Government only proves that they were unable to observe the real conditions of life in Soviet Russia and bring away a true impression, either from want of knowledge of the language, or on account of the terror which closed the mouths of all whom they happened to meet, even in spite of the most sincere endeavours to enter into direct relationship with the people, to overcome all difficulties, and to break through the circle of the O.G.P.U. agents, who follow the foreigner in Soviet Russia like swarms of flies.

Further, when visiting some Soviet institution in order to verify the information supplied by the interpreter or guide, it is necessary to know in what state that particular institution was before the Bolshevik *régime*. The Soviet *cicerones* do not hesitate when pointing out old, pre-Revolution institutions, such as universities, clinics, sanatoria, institutes, etc., to describe them as "achievements of the Soviet powers".

It is difficult, most difficult, to ascertain the truth in Soviet Russia, and very few visitors have succeeded in lifting, ever so little, the fringe of the curtain which hides the real state of affairs in the country and seeing —though some instinctively felt—the whole terror of the despotism of which it is a victim.

In the literature of Western Europe there is to this day no description of Russia by one who has lived there for many years before the Revolution and during its stormy days and until recently under the Soviet *régime* and who therefore knows the country, the people and the language and is consequently able to judge the changes which have taken place in Russia.

This consideration has been my chief reason for undertaking the difficult task of describing the real state of affairs in Soviet Russia.

Thirty-five years of residence in Russia (from 1891) have enabled me to acquaint myself with the country, to learn the language, and to acquire a very large circle of friends. My status as Belgian Consul until the advent of the Bolsheviks, and later, when they took power, my appointments as member of the Mission of the Supreme Commissioner of the League of Nations (Dr. F. Nansen) for the relief of the famine in Russia, as plenipotentiary of this Mission for the whole of the South-Eastern district of Soviet Russia, as assistant Director of the Catholic Mission in Rostov-on-Don, as plenipotentiary of the Students' Relief of Europe and many other international social organisations, placed me in the most advantageous

position, even under the Bolshevik *régime*, for investigating the Soviet rule and the conditions of life prevailing in Russia under it. The possibility of free movement within Soviet Russia, and the fact that I had important "pre-Revolution" acquaintances in all ranks of society, enabled me to study without let or hindrance Russian life under the Soviets in its most intimate details, and to collect directly the views of the people regarding the existing government. I was able to see Soviet Russia, not from the outward or "show" side, but from the "inside". I did not see the illuminated frontage of the building and state apartments prepared for the reception of "honoured guests," but the dwellings wherein people live and which boast no ornamentation.

The unbridled and arbitrary despotism which it has fallen to my lot to witness in U.S.S.R., the oppression which the Russian people are experiencing under the Communist yoke, the many sufferings which they so patiently endure, all the dreadfulness of the terror which dominates the millions of the nation urge me forcibly to raise my voice, even if it be a weak one, to warn other nations of what Communism brings in its train and what will also happen to us in the West if we allow this scourge of civilisation to be victorious in our countries.

Indeed, I consider that silence, under the present conditions, is tantamount to *treason*.

In my particular case the publication of material concerning U.S.S.R. is a duty to those Belgians, mostly workmen, formerly resident in Russia, who at their meeting held at Taganrog (Russia) petitioned the Belgian Government to appoint me Consul in order to protect their interests in South-East Russia during the trying years of civil war when there was no official representative for their protection. I think it a duty towards these countrymen of mine to give them a report as to what is taking place in the localities where they lived and worked and where many have

left behind the savings of practically the whole of their lives.

My principal purpose, however, in publishing this book is the hope that perhaps my feeble voice may be heard giving information of what is happening in U.S.S.R. and thus contribute a little to the cause of gathering and unifying in every country all healthy national forces for a fight with the destroyer of all moral and material values—Communism.

# PART I

## AN ACCOUNT OF THE RED PARADISE AS SHOWN TO FOREIGN VISITORS, WITH A CONSIDERATION OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE COMMUNIST SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

# CHAPTER I

## HOW SOVIET RUSSIA IS BEING "SHOWN"

THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF ITS FOREIGN, DIPLOMATIC, trade, and other representatives, and sometimes by direct addresses by the Soviet professional unions to the foreign ones, published in the various Communistic organs of various countries, the Soviet Government during the last few years has conducted a campaign among the professional workmen of the West to induce them to undertake group-trips to U.S.S.R. These delegations were accorded free *visas*, free travelling on Soviet territory and a number of other tempting privileges. The slogan of this campaign was "To acquaint the foreign workman with Soviet Russia, so that they may personally satisfy themselves on the spot of the non-existence of grounds for the 'spiteful' attacks by the capitalist Press, which lyingly spoke of the discontent of the population of Russia under the Soviet *régime* and the beggared state and decay of the country under the Soviets". From the start that new, though cunning, purpose of the Soviet Government was apparent.

The purpose was to show the delegations some previously selected and prepared works, factories, hospitals, crèches, rest-houses, etc., and give them the impression that all over Soviet Russia there exist only "model" works, factories, hospitals, etc.

The foreign workman, who had seen such achievements with his own eyes and who had accepted the things he had seen—actually isolated and artificially prepared "oases" in the hopeless desert of the real

state of the country—on their face value, would, from the Soviet point of view, become an ideal propagandist among the masses of the West.

And indeed, how could the other workmen disbelieve their colleague who, with assurance and genuine sincerity, would tell them of the marvellous achievements of the Soviet *régime* which he himself had seen in Russia?

The Communist Government of Russia, who spare nothing for the realisation of their principal aim, the seizing of world power by means of a Communist revolution, found this game well worth the candle.

The "Comintern" (Executive committee of the Communist International) hoped, in the event of success, for a very substantial increase in the number of its foreign sections owing to a mass enrollment of western workmen into the Communist parties of their countries.

The new type of propaganda opened up most alluring vistas: it seemed to resuscitate the hope of speeding up preparations for a world revolution.

Therefore the Soviet Government hastily organised in Moscow, Leningrad, and other important centres a series of "show" (as they were officially called) factories, prisons, schools, crèches, hospitals and rest-houses which were models of their kind, and in every branch of social life similar institutions for "show" purposes were created.

From the staffs of the N.K.I.D. (peoples' commissary for Foreign Affairs) and the O.G.P.U. (the Unified State Political Administration—formerly the Tcheka) a special body of "Guide-interpreters" was recruited.

Incidentally, at the headquarters of the O.G.P.U., these guides went through special courses of training in the art of "demonstrating" to foreigners the "sights" of Soviet Russia. After taking such precautions the U.S.S.R. government began to arrange

for visits of delegations of workmen from the West to Soviet-land.

I have witnessed the whole process of "the staging" of this farce called "inspecting U.S.S.R." and I have had the good fortune to be present when certain characteristic events took place which shed an interesting light on the "staging" of these demonstrations to foreigners by expert Soviet "producers". Here are a few of them:—

Two colleagues and I were involuntary witnesses of the following at the N.K.V.D. (people's commission for internal affairs) in the *private room* of the head of the Z.A.U.R.S.F.S.R. (Central Administrative Bureau of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic) Comrade Sergievsky, where we were sitting waiting for a document which was being typed out in the adjoining room.

An interpreter and a foreign visitor, a tall Englishman wearing glasses, entered the office of Comrade Sergievsky. The interpreter addressed Sergievsky in the name of the Englishman and asked his permission for the latter to inspect the prisons of Moscow, stating at the same time that Mme. Kameneva had directed him to Sergievsky.

Sergievsky: "Ah! this is the one? Yes, I have had a telephone call—all right, tell him to wait." Addressing the interpreter. . . . "Doesn't he speak any Russian at all?"—The interpreter to Sergievsky: "No, this is quite an easy one, not a word!"

Then Comrade Sergievsky, in our presence, called his assistant, Comrade Saytzev, and asked him whether he had warned "Sokolniki" (one of the Moscow prisons) on receipt of the 'phone call from Kameneva that morning. Hearing that he had, he asked him to enquire of "Sokolniki" for the last time whether they were ready, and to warn them that in an hour's time they must expect a visitor. Then he called out the Joint Chief of the Prison Service, whose office was facing his own, a young man in a

blue uniform adorned with yellow braiding, and after instructing him to accompany the "guest" warned him: "only, be careful that you do not put your foot in it over there, whatever happens!"

The Englishman was most grateful, and was given a permit-card right away; bows were exchanged, and the Englishman, accompanied by the interpreter and the Assistant Chief of the Prison Service, departed.

Sergievsky, obviously addressing his secretary and forgetting that the latter had gone to fetch our document, exclaimed: "What simpletons they are, these foreign . . ."—but here he turned round and it cannot have been a "pleasant" surprise for him to find us, whom he had evidently forgotten, sitting there, and no secretary.

This unpremeditated ejaculation from the lips of so important a Communist as Comrade Sergievsky, who, moreover, occupied one of the highest posts in the Soviet *camarilla*, is not without a certain piquancy!

This incident, although it concerned a member of the Soviet Government, referred only to an individual traveller visiting Soviet Russia.

The following refers to one of the most important delegations that have visited the Soviet Union—the delegation of the British Trade Unions.

This delegation of the British Trade Unionists was particularly well received, and the Bolsheviks had prepared unusually elaborate and detailed plans for its stay in Soviet Russia. The visitors were of great importance, and the most careful preparations were made for their arrival. The Bolsheviks started these preparations a long time in advance, laboriously working out a time-table for the delegation. But, however careful the calculations, mistakes are apt to slip in. The mistakes the Bolsheviks made were numerous, and if the delegates had been less credulous and more observant, and if some of them had been less fond of luxury, banqueting, and some of the local

beverages,[1] they would have drawn conclusions about Soviet Russia very different from those which have been published in their notorious Report.

I saw this delegation twice, first in the Don Basin and later in the city of Rostov-on-Don. I will recount one of the "little mistakes" which the Bolshevik authorities allowed to happen during the visit of this delegation. It took place in the Donetz Basin, the "Donbas", as the Bolsheviks now call it, at one of the little stations so numerous in this district where the network of railway lines is the thickest in Russia.

The time-table, prepared a long time before, provided for a halt of about five minutes here, but unexpectedly it became necessary to delay the delegates' train for over an hour. I am at a loss to say how this was explained to the delegates, but the peasants from the surrounding villages were very soon let into the secret. They were mobilised with their carts in the most urgent manner and were made to cart straw to a works situated close to the railway, which had stood idle ever since the White Army left. Only when the straw had been delivered to its destination, wetted and set alight, and the chimney stacks of the works began to emit a thick black smoke, giving the illusion of a virile and active Soviet industry, was the train allowed to proceed with the delegation.

I do not know what the delegates thought when they saw the numerous peasants' carts returning to the village along the road running by the side of the railway line, but I heard what the peasants said when they saw the train with the delegates. I am at a loss to repeat it, however, on account of the strong adjectives which were addressed to the train and its occupants.

[1] To this day comment is being made upon this "peculiarity" of the English delegates and many are the anecdotes which circulate among the people throughout Soviet Russia.

Subsequently it transpired that the Soviet authorities in the village had mistaken the date of the delegates' visit; they did not expect them until the following day . . . and they were not ready!

Such an incident requires no comment!

Another example of "staging" the prosperity of the country and the wellbeing of the population happened before my own eyes at a reception of the same Trade Unions' delegation in Rostov-on-Don.

Close to the station of Rostov-on-Don are the most important Railway works of south-east Russia, formerly belonging to the Wladicaucase Railway Co. and employing several thousand workmen. These works had been specially equipped by the Bolsheviks as "a place fit to show to foreigners", but in anticipation of the visit of the British Trade Unionists further arrangements were made: several hundred workmen were warned before the arrival of the delegates that "the whole of the following day they should be on leave" and what was even more strange, with "the strictest orders not to come to the works". By a "curious coincidence" all the workmen who had been allowed leave were known for their "Social-democratic views" before the advent of the Bolshevik *régime* and consequently were dangerous to the Bolsheviks during the visit of the Socialist delegation of the Trade Unions. When the delegation came through the various shops, to the greatest astonishment of the workmen who had remained at the works, the benches usually occupied by the workmen who were "on leave" were not empty . . . at each of them there was a workman, only he hailed from Friedrich Engels Street No. 33, where was situated the Rostov G.P.U.! And it was to these workmen that the delegates were led at the Railway works in Rostov-on-Don!

At the "Sovprof" (unified professional unions) preparations were at their height for the reception of the foreign guests—the British Trade Unionists.

## How Soviet Russia is "Shown"

The building occupied by the Professional Union in Rostov was a large block of five stories fronting on Friedrich Engels Street (formerly Sadovquia) with its side aspect on the Voroshilov Prospect (formerly Stolypin). The preparations for the reception took a peculiar form. Practically all the most important departments of the Professional Unions (the registration of workless members, the dole department, the legal assistance department, etc.) were moved to the back of the building, the entrance to which was from the Voroshilov Prospect. In this way the main entrance was left for the sole use of the Trade Unions delegation and the civic authorities of Rostov-on-Don, who were to meet them officially. This was done for fear the honoured guests might by accident witness the frequent conflicts which take place at the "Sovprof" between the oppressed workmen from the government works and the "government" Professional Union, which invariably refused to assist and protect the workmen: and principally from the fear that *the delegates might get into direct contact with the Russian workmen.* The Bolsheviks, who feared—and not without good reason—such a meeting, got out of the dilemma very cleverly: all the workmen who came to the "Sovprof" on business got access from the side entrance of the building, and the delegation and the Communists who were to meet it had the main entrance to themselves. But in the rooms which were to be shown to the delegation there were tables covered with literature on the subject of Professional Unions, and on every table appeared new inscriptions, new posters and slogans: all was done to impress the delegates with the *supposed* close and friendly contact between the Soviet Professional Unions and the masses of the workmen. These "Working Masses" were, however, here as everywhere else, impersonated by the secret collaborators of G.P.U. These pseudo-workmen came to the Professional Union in full

view of the delegation with all kinds of requests and petitions, which were satisfied there and then by the "solicitous" representatives of the Professional Union. The comedy was well played and easily made "the required" impression upon the foreign guests.

Several banquets and meetings with solemn greetings to the foreign "*confrères*", arranged between the visits to works and factories, finally conquered the hearts of the delegates and definitely converted them to the belief that Socialism was absolutely triumphant under the Communist *régime* in Russia.

And the same thing happened throughout the visit of the delegation; pre-arranged, prepared inspections, receptions, and meetings met them everywhere, just as with all other delegations, during their stay in Soviet Russia.

The population, however, before whom the Bolsheviks were preparing their rigs without the least compunction, were asking themselves the question: Can the foreigners possibly believe all this? but, whether they liked it or not, they were forced to say nothing. They had to keep quiet to safeguard their lives and their freedom: they were afraid to go near the foreigners, knowing from long and bitter experience what was in store for those who should dare to have any communication with "the foreign visitors". The sharp and all-penetrating eyes of the G.P.U. "guard the peace" of the foreign delegations and single visitors. The people are surrounded by an impenetrable wall of agents from this institution, so that the foreign enquirers may not catch sight of the real exhausted aspect of the great sufferer—the land of Russia!

A foreigner, by addressing a few casual words to an ordinary citizen of U.S.S.R., would unconsciously bring down on him all the repressions and punishments of which only the "humane" O.G.P.U. is capable.

The cap of one of the members of the same delegation of British Trade Unionists was the cause of an occurrence which well illustrates this fact.

In a dining-car—one of those "commandeered" by the Soviet powers from the International Sleeping Car and European Express Co.—of the train which bore the delegation, a group of delegates and their escort were noisily dining: all the other tables, it was more than evident, were occupied by agents of O.G.P.U., as the other passengers on the train had not yet been informed that dinner was being served. After the members of the delegation had finished their meal and left the dining-car, the ordinary passengers were admitted. Comparatively few people came in, evidently for fear of meeting the delegates. One of the diners, a fairly decent-looking young man, noticed a cap that had been forgotten by somebody, and was just about to point this out to one of the staff of the car, when all of a sudden an English delegate came running in and asked the attendant in English for something. The man who had found the cap, and who evidently knew English, understood that the delegate was asking whether "anybody had seen his cap". Rising from his seat he told the delegate, also in English, that he had found his cap, and handed it to him. The delegate thanked him, and, evidently pleased at having come across somebody who understood English, he was about to enter into conversation with him, when in rushed one of the escort, a man of a fairly pronounced Semitic type, in a leather jerkin, looking for the delegate. He saw at a glance what was happening, rushed to the delegate, said something to him, and led him out of the dining-car. The diners had not had time to finish their soup when agents of the T.O.G.P.U. (Transport G.P.U.) entered, this time in uniforms, and the man who had pointed out the cap of the delegate was arrested before all those present. At the next station, under a guard of Tchekists, he was taken off the train.

What happened to him afterwards? What was his fate? I thought then that I should never know. But the freaks of fate are very strange at times: when later on I was arrested by the Bolsheviks and confined in the Boutirky Prison, one of the O.G.P.U. prisons in Moscow, I happened to hear the epilogue. The unfortunate citizen was charged under section 66 of the criminal code for spying on behalf of a foreign power; by some miracle he was not shot, but "came off lightly" with only three years' detention in the concentration camp on the Solovetzky Island.

A casual courtesy towards a foreign delegate, a few innocent words said in the absence of the Tchekists, proved his destruction. But it must not be thought that such occurrences are isolated instances in "free" Soviet-land. In order to prove the contrary here are a few typical examples of victims of "relationship with foreigners". The persons of whom I am writing are personally known to me and I have languished in Soviet dungeons at the same time as they. Here I shall only cite a few instances of persons being convicted for contact with foreigners; in my subsequent narrative I shall have occasion to come back to this subject. Meanwhile I will introduce to the reader example No. 1, a chauffeur, a simple workman, incidentally a Jew, as he told me himself, who was in the Red guards when the Bolsheviks "were establishing their power" and who believed in Bolshevism.

In the summer of 1925 he had to take part in the well-known All-Union Auto-race in the humble capacity of "accompanying mechanic". During the run he had the audacity to speak to a foreign driver, not through an interpreter, but directly. The driver was a German, and there are very few Jews in Russia, or for that matter in the whole world, who cannot speak German, the Jewish dialect being very similar to the "Platt Deutsch" dialect of Germany. Their conversation was observed by the accompanying

agent, and the unfortunate man paid a heavy penalty for his daring—three years on the Solovetzky Island.

The following case is not devoid of a certain comic element: in this instance the *dramatis personae* were husband and wife, he a militiaman in one of the Moscow sections, she a charwoman, at the German Embassy (No. 10 Léontievsky Péréoulok). One evening, having finished his duties, the husband could not resist the temptation of visiting his wife. About 11 p.m. he knocked stealthily at one of the houses in the Léontievsky Lane where the Embassy was situated, called out his wife, and, in the eyes of O.G.P.U., committed a terrible crime—he spent the night with his wife. The night passed quietly for the poor militiaman, but the morning threatened him with a storm. At about 9 a.m. he left his wife, but, though he attempted to avoid detection, he was stopped in the very street, and taken under the "friendly" protection of G.P.U. and lodged at Loubianka No. 2 (formerly the house of the Tcheka, and, before the revolution, the house of the Insurance Co. "Rossia," but now of O.G.P.U.); from there he was removed to Loubianka No. 14, the preliminary prison of G.P.U., and after that to Boutirky, where we met. Try as he might to explain that the reason of his visit to No. 10 Léontievsky Lane was his wife, plead as he might with the examining judge "at least to look at their passports and satisfy himself," all was in vain. The unfortunate man received his sentence in my presence, in February, 1926—"five years in a concentration camp." Early in March he was taken away with a party of other condemned to Kemy, and from there to the Solovetzky Island.

So far, in describing facts, I have refrained from mentioning the names of the persons concerned. My reason for this is that names known to nobody will certainly not increase the impression upon the reader: on the other hand, mention of their names might harm the unfortunates who are still in the grip of a

power which exercises the most unbounded licence. But, fortunately, in one of the cases which I am about to relate, I am in a position to give not only the name but also the address of the person concerned. The reader will probably have guessed already that this particular person has by now left the territory of the "Free Soviet Union," and he is right.

As a matter of fact one of my comrades in misfortune, who "sat" with me in the Boutirky O.G.P.U. prison, being a Latvian subject, was with a number of his compatriots exchanged by their government for Soviet agents detained in Latvia. This friend of my Bolshevik captivity, in his letter informing me of his release on the 1st January, 1927, also tells me of a few happenings which took place after I had left the Boutirky prison. One of them refers to the visit of a foreign delegation to the prison.

The reader can judge for himself, from the facts that I am about to give, how much these foreign workmen delegates could have seen in this Soviet prison. I will quote from the letters: "H—— has remained obstinate as in the past. For having dared to converse with the Belgian delegation in French he nearly got M.O.K. (male solitary confinement), but he was fortunate enough to be saved by our nearly starting a mutiny. In the same manner I was liberated from M.O.K., where I was confined for conversation with the delegation of German Freethinkers. . . ."

I shall not give the name of the man who had spoken to the Belgian Workmen's delegation, as he is still in Russia, but I shall be pleased to communicate to any member of that delegation who wishes for it, where, when and how this man spoke to them: and I will even promise in the last extreme to show them the man's photograph in order to remind them of him and to convince them *how cruelly they have been deceived in U.S.S.R!* When I say to any member of the Belgian delegation, I of course exclude the Communists.

As for the author of the letter I have just quoted, who was incarcerated for having spoken to the German Freethinkers' delegation, he was formerly an inmate of cell No. 10 of the working wing of the Boutirky prison, employed there as artist-decorator in the club theatre; his name is Evgeny Karlovitch Shmidt, and he is now living in Riga, Latvia, Palasta iela No. 4.

The facts related above will suffice to show the reader how G.P.U. punishes ordinary citizens of U.S.S.R. for every word spoken to foreign visitors, but I think it necessary to add a few words about another group of people who, although not Communistically minded, from the nature of the positions they occupy have occasion—perhaps I should rather say *are forced*—to come into contact with foreigners.

This group is the Russian scientists, some of whom bear great names and are universally known. They cannot be hidden away from the foreigner; in fact they have got to be shown; the foreigner must be persuaded, if possible, that they have got nothing against the Soviet Power, that in fact they are even pleased with it! Scientists, however sceptical, will usually pay attention to authorities in their own branch of learning: and the Bolsheviks make particular use of this fact. Each of these Russian professors, even if he does not value his own life, has got a family, a wife, children, grandchildren, and relatives, and they are hostages. . . . Their fate depends—even their lives—upon one unguarded word, and the poor Russian scientist is forced for their sake to evade by every possible means any risky questions asked him by his foreign colleagues.

The famous "V.O.K.S." (Society of the Union for the cultural ties with foreigners), at the head of which is the woman Kameneva, draws from such a use of the Russian Professors 100 per cent. of its propaganda for the political, scientific, and literary spheres of the West.

During the period of famine in Soviet Russia I had to organise the help which the professoriate of the West sent to their Russian colleagues: and consequently I am personally acquainted with many Russian scientists. *On behalf of a group of Russian scientists, who have requested and authorised me, I warn their Western colleagues of their political status.*

One will readily understand, after this, why the Russian people dare not speak with foreigners, and why they dare not disclose the truth about their life to them. One must not forget that, apart from the fear of punishment, the Russian, naturally to some extent, mistrusts the stranger. He suspects him of harbouring sympathy for the Soviet power, if only because the Bolsheviks have allowed him to enter the country: the people know very well with what difficulty foreigners obtain *visas* from the Soviet Powers.

Consequently the foreigner visiting Soviet Russia is unable to confirm the information supplied to him by the "guide" to whom he has been entrusted, and the enquirer lacks the knowledge of real pre-revolution conditions required for this purpose. The result is that statements are made similar to those contained in the report of the British Trade Unions delegation. The conditions of railway transport in U.S.S.R. afford a good instance. It is strange, for example, to read of the ever-improving conditions of railway transport in Soviet Russia as set out in the Report of that delegation, who during their travel through the Union so often travelled along single-track lines which formerly had been double-track ones. The Bolsheviks repair one track with the other, a main line with branch lines, and double tracks are converted into single tracks (the North Caucasian Railway, etc.). These signs of "Bolshevik progress" the delegates could not appreciate, for the simple reason that they did not know the state in which a particular line had been before the Bolsheviks came into power. And

similar things happen everywhere to all visiting delegations and individual travellers.

This is borne out by the following instance:—

An Englishman who came to Moscow on commercial business was shown the University of Moscow, the most ancient of Russia's universities, established in the eighteenth century in the reign of the Empress Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great. He was informed that this university had been established by the Soviet Powers and that before the Bolsheviks it had been "some kind of a government building"! And the foreign visitor was compelled to believe that the Bolsheviks had transformed some government building into a Palace of Science. One feels prompted to ask why the Bolsheviks do not show the foreigner the following typical case of a diametrically opposite transformation of a school into "a government building": the building Loubianka No. 14, formerly, under the "Tsarist *régime*", a high school (if I remember rightly, the 3rd Moscow Gymnasium), is now, under the Bolshevik *régime*, an O.G.P.U. prison in the very centre of the city next to another prison—also an "interior" one—Loubianka No. 2 (formerly the building of the Insurance Co. "Rossia"). A foreigner, given the opportunity of inspecting without let or hindrance "free" Soviet Russia, would very soon have noticed that it is not the schools which have developed and multiplied under the Bolsheviks in Russia, and that it is not for them that a shortage of buildings is felt there. No; it is not for them, but for the prisons and for the dungeons, the need for which under the Bolshevik *régime* has grown and developed to such an extent that the old pre-revolution prisons are not only insufficient for the Soviet *régime* but they are even no more than a drop in the ocean.

Only few, very few, among us foreigners, have discovered the real state of unfortunate Russia under the heavy Communist yoke.

For this reason there is particular occasion for rejoicing when at last our Western workmen's delegations begin to notice this truth and when their eyes begin to be opened to the terrible evil which Bolshevism is perpetrating in Russia. The "first swallow" in this respect was one of the Scandinavian workmen's delegations which came to U.S.S.R. with their own interpreters and their own plans for studying the country. What happened? The Bolsheviks allowed this delegation to come as far as Moscow, where they offered them an itinerary and interpreters of their own. The delegation refused, and the result was startling: the Soviet Government forbade the delegation to remain in U.S.S.R. and gave them forty-eight hours to leave the territory of the Soviet Union. Such an act on their part is tantamount to a confession.

Yet another workmen's delegation managed to discover the truth in Soviet Russia: it was the second German Workmen's delegation. The reader will best gather what happened from the declaration of one of its members, the Hamburg Bakers' Professional delegate, Ostermayer. This declaration was published in the Berlin *Der Socialistische Bote* No. 2/3 (144-145) on the 5th of February, 1927:—

> "A tremendous impression was created in this respect in Germany by the Hamburg Professional Ostermayer, who had visited Russia as one of the members of the so-called 'second German delegation'. When this delegation was being organised it was stated that it would be exclusively composed of Social Democrats and Non-party men—with a view to eliminating all possible bias from its future conclusions. To the greatest surprise of those members who had allowed themselves to be tempted by these promises, it was discovered when leaving that eight Communists were going. Further, when the delegation reached Russia and

A tchekist posing for his portrait.

*Face page* 35]

divided into three groups a Social Democrat was nominated chairman but invariably his deputy was a Communist, and besides this a German Communist journal was attached to each group."

Dealing with this point Ostermayer says:

"Given such a composition the delegation may be said to have been run by the Communists. To make a plain statement—the Socialist majority was simply led by the nose. All consultations with the Russians took place behind the backs of the committee, who were invariably faced by already accomplished facts."

How then, under such conditions, could it be said that the delegates had the right to select, on their own, the undertakings which they wished to inspect? Let us hear Ostermayer:

"When our delegation arrived in any centre the heads of the professional unions came to meet us, and they submitted a list of various undertakings which were considered suitable for our inspection. From this list the delegation was allowed to make its choice. That is why it can be safely said that the delegation was only shown *Potemkin Villages*. Here are a few examples: The Crimea group inspected in Toola first of all the 'samovar' factory, and secondly the leather works, after which the inspection of the workmen's settlement was to take place. But as there was little time left it became necessary to forego the inspection of the workmen's settlement. We suggested the inspection of a medium bakehouse.[1] It would not have taken more than ten minutes. We told the Russian guide quite plainly that we

[1] Ostermayer is himself working in a large Hamburg bakery and is a member of the Union.

had seen quite enough of the large undertakings and that we wished to inspect the smaller ones. 'All right' was the reply, and we were accordingly driven through the city in a car. When we were passing a small bakery I pulled the guide from the Professional Union by the sleeve and said to him: 'Comrade, let us inspect this bakery!' But his reply was: 'No, not this one, but the one opposite!' And although Toola boasts three co-operative bakeries, we were conducted to the largest one. I mention this in order to show that we could not inspect the undertakings which we wished to visit, but only those to which we were led.

"As there was amongst us a pork-butcher, we particularly wished to inspect such a plant. At least in two places, we were told that the plant was just being reconstructed and therefore we could not inspect it. In the Donbas (Makeevka) we visited the co-operative stores, which we were told were running bakeries, pork-butcheries and shops. We wished to inspect one bakery, one pork-butcher's plant and one shop. In the office we were told that the sausage department could only be inspected after 3 p.m. as work did not begin there before that time. We quite realised that this was nothing but an excuse, for they were well aware that our dinner had been fixed for this hour. Thereupon we asked to see the department outside its working hours: we wished to see the installation and not the workmen. We were told that the department was being reconstructed. Again we retorted that we would not be disturbed by the alterations: on the contrary, it would be interesting to see what installation there had been in the old times, during the Tsar's *régime*, and how the Soviet Government equips these plants. We were taken to the slaughter-houses. After inspecting these we again declared that we did not wish

to see slaughter-houses, but a pork-butcher's plant. Then a Russian trade unionist said to us: 'Comrades, I may as well tell you quite plainly that we produce some very good sausages but we cannot show you the plant!'"

Of the conditions of life of the Russian workmen Ostermayer said incidentally:—

"Undoubtedly somebody has been talking a great deal of rubbish in Russia! For instance, one German Communist related that a German workman is unable to buy himself a suit of clothes or anything of that kind unless he gets it on the hire-purchase system. But it must be stated that the clothes which the German workman wears are considered articles of luxury by the Russian, inaccessible even on the hire-purchase system."

Quoting a few facts as to the prices of various commodities in Russia, Ostermayer ends this part of his report with the following conclusion:

"Although we are told that the Russian workman is living well, *I affirm the contrary!* Here in Germany one can buy more for one mark (48 kopeks) than can be bought in Russia for a rouble."

The Communist press affirmed that the delegation chose its itinerary with absolute freedom, and that in this way it reached localities in which the population had not the least suspicion of their impending visit. These statements, also, Ostermayer declares to be fairy tales. It is true that the Crimea and Ural group had changed their programme somewhat, but that was only done *with the permission of the Russian trade unionists*: the alteration was decided on *a week* before the delegation left, and all the places visited *had been warned* of their visit.

Ostermayer sums up his general impressions as follows:

> "As regards freedom, my impression is that the proletariat of Russia do not enjoy even that measure of freedom which they enjoyed in Tsarist Russia. Only think that under the Tsar there existed four political parties which are not tolerated to-day! I must confess that *during the whole of my life*, including the time of my military service, *I have never experienced such oppression as is experienced in Russia*."

The Soviet plan to deceive the working class of Western Europe by trick inspections of Soviet Russia by workmen's delegations has not, however, succeeded. The workmen have at last realised the gigantic swindle which the Soviets have tried to perpetrate upon them. It is only to be regretted that it has happened so late and that the first delegations, and in particular the delegation of British trade unionists, have strongly assisted in this Bolshevik deception, and have helped it to consolidate its position.

Let us hope that the reports of the later delegations which have visited U.S.S.R. will penetrate into the very depth of the Western working masses and dispel the results of the mistakes made by the first delegations, who have been far too trustful towards the Soviets.

# CHAPTER II

## THE STATE OF INDUSTRY IN U.S.S.R.

THE COMMUNISTS DECLARE TO THE WORLD THAT THE capitalist *régime* is antiquated and has ceased to exist, since it can no longer satisfy the first needs of the people. According to Communist ideas capitalism has reached the point at which it is no longer productive and in consequence is doomed to perish. Capitalism, they proclaim to the world, can no longer create any values.

The Communists, in offering their economic system, claim that it is destined to save the world which capitalism has brought to a dead-end. They offer the world a paradise on earth, universal prosperity and contentment. Their system, they say, raises to the highest level the economic status of the world which is to-day suffocating in the embrace of capitalism.

These so easily promised wonders of improvement and universal prosperity, these pictures of Eden and Eldorado, which they unfold like a wonderful fairy tale before the eyes of the crowd, beckon and attract the masses exhausted by the cataclysm which has just taken place, and bewitch them. Many mistake the "mirage" for the real thing. Indeed, it is sweet to believe in the Communistic wonder world, life within it is pictured so temptingly.

To those who have believed in it, and who follow Communism, not for base, personal motives but out of simple faith, I dedicate the following description of what I have seen and investigated in "the Communist Soviet Paradise". Has not Communism

already managed to establish over nearly one-sixth of the earth's surface its "miracle-creating" economic system?

The Communist Eden already exists—U.S.S.R. is its name. Seek as we may in this Eden those new material values which surely, during the 10 years of its existence, Communism must have created, our labours will be in vain. Like Diogenes, who with a light in broad daylight endeavoured to find a man and failed, so shall we fail to find in the Soviet Union what we are looking for. Yes! One has got to become reconciled to the obvious, but it is not cheering for Communism. Communism in Russia took everything into its own hands, but it has failed to increase the wealth of the country, and has even diminished it.

Communism has proved itself incapable of creating. It has proved itself a destructive, not a creative force, and it has beggared a wealthy country. Even the most cursory review of Soviet economics and a comparison of them with those that formerly existed in Russia will prove this.

I shall endeavour, for the sake of greater impartiality in describing what I have seen in Soviet Russia, to corroborate my statements by quotations from the Communist Press and from official declarations made by Communist leaders, who are occasionally forced against their own will to acknowledge the realities so galling to them. Generally speaking, however, the Bolsheviks try by all means to hide the real state of the country, and even, by all kinds of lying devices, to spread false information as to its prosperity.

A typical instance of this was the effort made by the Bolsheviks to use, in this way, the Mission of Dr. Nansen which at the time was helping to fight the great famine in Russia. A few months before the liquidation of the famine relief, the Professor's personal secretary arrived in Moscow, at the Central

Bureau of the Nansen Mission, with the object of creating in conjunction with the Mission a special information bureau for supplying Western Europe with news about Soviet Russia. When I was approached and requested to supply information about the district under my charge (the Caucasus, South-east, and Don Basin) I categorically refused to give any information whatsoever. I based my refusal on the fact that it was impossible to give correct information because it would testify against the Soviets and consequently would lead to repressions on their part. I also refused to supply Soviet statistics on the ground that I knew them to be intentionally false, and in proof of this I quoted certain peculiarly self-contradictory figures.

Nansen's secretary, faced by these facts, went immediately to the Supreme Council of Peoples' Economics (V.S.N.H.) to ascertain the reason for such discrepancies. The Bolsheviks on this occasion managed to get out of the ugly situation by pleading "printers' errors". On the same day, but after the dinner hour, one of the members of that Supreme Council called upon me at our offices in order to find out why I had refused to supply the Mission with information on the South-east region of Russia, under my charge; "It is such an interesting, such a rich district! It comprises such territories as the Caucasus and the South-east of Russia! We Bolsheviks are proud of our achievements and frankly surprised at your refusal to acknowledge them." "Well," I replied, "in view of the fact that nowhere have I succeeded in discovering these achievements, I cannot take the moral responsibility of supplying false information, as I have seen pictures absolutely different from those which you paint of your industrial boom. For instance, tell me, comrade, in what state is your textile industry, and in particular the cotton branch—formerly the unchallenged pride of Russia?" "I assure you, it is in a state of great

prosperity: the factories are working at full pressure!" replied the Soviet representative. "And your stocks," I said, "will they allow you to continue in the same strain?" "We are well provided with stocks, and for a long time to come!" I was assured by this representative of V.S.N.H. "You see, this is just the kind of information which I am unable to communicate to Europe," I replied. "How can you expect me to sign such a declaration? You know, that it does not correspond even approximately with actual facts. Before the Revolution your cotton industry received its raw material from two sources: home production from Turkestan, and imports from America. In 1913-14, for instance, Turkestan gave you 14 million poods (224,000 tons) of fibre and you imported a further 13 millions from abroad. Now you are not strong enough to import from abroad, for, if you had had the money, you would not have allowed us foreigners to come here for the purpose of helping your starving population: you would have done it yourselves. Turkestan, which supplied you with the greater part of the fibre in exchange for grain which you sent there from Russia, is now compelled to cultivate grain which you are unable to supply; you have got a famine yourselves: consequently you cannot expect much cotton from that quarter. What is left? The stocks of the former proprietors of the factories which you confiscated? Yes! The former proprietors were good masters, not to be compared with such as you: their stocks were more than respectable. But these stocks have been greatly reduced during the few years of your management and you are unable to replenish them! Such, roughly, is the state of your cotton spinning industry at the present moment. As you will observe, it differs somewhat from the description given by yourselves. Would you like us—under the existing circumstances would you allow us—to issue our information as to your economical position?" Then

my commissary suddenly asked me: "Tell me, how long have you been in Russia?" "About 35 years," I answered. "Yes," he said, "one can see that. You know, under the present conditions we quite agree with you—How shall I put it?—It seems quite unnecessary to establish an information bureau in connection with your branch—I believe it would be better to do without it!" And after that the commissary took his leave and once more assured me of the uselessness of establishing an information bureau in connection with the Mission branch for the South-east of Soviet Russia. Seeing their cards exposed, the Bolsheviks were the first to oppose the idea of my giving out information as to the state of the industries in the South-east of Soviet Russia. This information would represent the truth and consequently would be dangerous to them.

Now that I am back in my native country and find myself out of reach of the Bolshevik clutches, I can with safety proceed to tell the truth about Bolshevik Russia. I shall take the liberty of describing, in particular, facts concerning my own district, the richest industrial area of Russia. After the withdrawal of the White Army the whole industry of the Donetz Basin was taken over in a *safe and sound* condition by the Soviet Powers. Everything which the Bolsheviks say concerning the destruction wrought by the White Army I declare to be *nothing but a lie!*

I have known this district from the very time when it had just begun to develop, I have been there under the Tsarist *régime*, under the White Armies, and soon after their withdrawal: so I have been able to form a personal and competent opinion.

But the Bolsheviks themselves, in their own Press, quote figures which give the lie direct to their affirmations about the destruction of the Don Basin by the White Armies, as the following figures will prove: Before the Revolution the Don Basin contained about 900 pits of industrial importance; apart from

these there existed about 600 small well-pits belonging to the peasants and of practically no importance.

During the first half of 1921 there were, according to Soviet statistics, 959 pits working: consequently it is foolish to talk of the destruction for which the White Armies are supposed to be responsible. From that period onwards their number has begun to decrease in a catastrophic manner; and in the second half of the same year they had already decreased to 687. At the beginning of 1922 there were only 288; in 1925 the number of working pits was already under the 200 mark and still continued to decrease. It is true that of late the Bolsheviks proclaim the number to have increased, reaching nearly 400, but how do they arrive at this figure? The Bolsheviks have started to include in the numbers given those insignificant peasant pits which, from an industrial point of view, are of no importance whatsoever, making them serve as "supers" to fill up the sorry list of the producing coal pits. In reality their number continues to shrink. This shrinkage is explained by the fact that the Bolsheviks gradually abandon the pits in which the coal seam is at too great a depth, and in which consequently an output can only be obtained with considerable difficulty. They only work the pits where the seams are close to the surface and where work is easy. Under the Bolshevik system of working, part of the plant from the abandoned pits is carried to those which are still working; the old pits are left practically unattended, and become flooded with water which nobody troubles to pump out.

The destruction wrought in the Don Basin is inconceivable! The output not only of coal but also of iron ore in the Kreevoy Rog district has dwindled terribly, hardly attaining 10 to 15 per cent. of the output of pre-war days. It will be readily understood how this branch of industry was working before the advent of the Bolsheviks from the fact that when

they came they took over stocks, at the southern iron works alone, represented by the gigantic figure of over 50 million poods of metal (800,000 tons). The heavy industries of the Donbas have been reduced to a disgraceful condition by the bad management of the Bolsheviks.

It is interesting to record the following characteristic of Communist "management":—All the nationalised heavy metal industries of Southern Russia were concentrated by the Bolsheviks in one big trust "Yougo-Stal," and this trust set itself the task of raising the level of Soviet metallurgy. The Soviet papers contained numerous remarks of this sort: "Yesterday the blast furnace No. —— was started at the Yougostal works, named after Comrade Petrovsky"; and a week or two later: "A new victory on the economic front—we have started two more furnaces," etc., etc. After a time I had added up such a number of blast furnaces which had been started that even with the greatest credulity one could not but doubt the authenticity of these "victories on the economic front". Taking advantage of a trip which I had to take to the Donbas, I applied myself to elucidating this question on the spot. Armed with the Press cuttings I had accumulated, I managed to visit two works out of the large number which had started their furnaces going. And what did I find?—The furnaces were idle! I enquired there and then whether these furnaces had ever been started at all. It appeared that they had! Things seemed to be getting more puzzling every hour. But finally it turned out that the solution was a very simple one: the furnaces were started, the stocks found at the works were used up, and then the Bolsheviks found it "expedient" to put out the started furnace and to move to another district, to some idle metallurgical works. There the furnaces were started again, and again the Press was full of "fresh victories on the economic front".

One of the Red directors of such works, who was in a position to estimate the effort required for re-starting a furnace, in conversation with me justified such a method of exploitation of the plants by the Yougostal Trust. These were his words: "But in this way we supply work to the local unemployed. And when they have had a chance of earning a little we give others a chance, in a different district."

"But when you go you again leave the people without work!"

"What does it matter? All must eat. They have earned a bit: they must give others a chance. And then do not overlook the main point—see what good propaganda it is; see how the industry is being improved, how new and more works are set working, and the *centre* is pleased with us: they have got something to boast of to foreign countries."

What more can be added to such reasoning on the part of a Red Director?—I think nothing: you cannot go beyond that!

The coal, metal, and coke industries are closely related, and the Donbas, before the revolution, had been covered by a network of numberless coke-oven plants.

What is there now? The coke-oven industry of the Donbas (i.e. of the whole U.S.S.R.) now ekes out a most miserable existence: it is conducted in an archaic and rudimentary way such as would only have seemed possible several decades ago. It would appear unthinkable, but in the coke industry of U.S.S.R. hardly any by-products are recovered, whereas elsewhere it is from the by-products that the principal profit of this industry is derived. In the whole of U.S.S.R. there *is only one plant* which recovers the by-products. This is the former Russo-Belgian Company at Enakievo, and, what is particularly remarkable, the Soviet Press proudly proclaims it as one of the achievements of the Soviet Powers. Instead of being ashamed of trying to hide such a terrible decay in the

industry, the Soviets endeavour to represent it as an achievement, hoping that those unacquainted with the former power of Russian industry will believe their statements.

In the journal SCIENCE AND TECHNIQUE, published in Leningrad, No. 13 (160), dated 14th April, 1926, an article headed *Our Achievements* and sub-headed "Coke-Benzol Works" states that "The Enakievo coke-benzol works, for the recovery of by-products from coke ovens, is *the only one of its kind in U.S.S.R.* At the present time this plant has an output of more than 650 tons of coal-tar per month and 150 tons of crude benzol. Besides this it has begun to manufacture crude carbolic acid and naphthaline, which are in great demand for technical needs. A special oil is being manufactured for the treatment of railway sleepers. A plant has been laid down for the manufacture of sulphate of ammonia, and it is intended at an early date to produce the so-called *pyridine bases*, largely used in the manufacture of paint. The recovery of ammonia water and 'goudron,' a cementing agent used in the manufacture of coal briquets and asphalt pavements, has also been inaugurated."

On my return to Belgium I met the celebrated engineer Eugene Witmeur, one of the late Directors of the Russo-Belgian Company, the owners of the Enakievo Works, and the most competent man as regards the Donbas heavy industries; to him I communicated the above, and it may be of interest to hear what he, as an expert, had to say on the subject:—

Mr. Witmeur told me that the fact alone that there is only this one plant in U.S.S.R. which recovers the by-products, is, in his estimation, quite sufficient to show how the Soviet industries have decayed. It is impossible to flout the opinion of Mr. Witmeur, but, in order that the reader may have a better and clearer idea of the decay of Russian industries under the Soviets, I shall give figures from statistics of pre-

revolution days regarding the recovery of by-products of the coke industry in the Donbas, for comparison. The reader will gather how many such plants, described as "the only one of its kind in U.S.S.R.," there were in the Donbas before the Soviets, and will see how progressive their output was:—

RECOVERY OF BY-PRODUCTS FROM COKE OVENS: 1914–1915
(1 pood=about 36 English pounds)

| By-product | 1914 | 1915 | 1916 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tar . . | 2,929,935 poods | 3,280,811 poods | |
| Ammonia Water | 1,223,262 „ | 1,301,352 „ | |
| Sulphate of Ammonia . | 1,048,293 „ | 726,848 „ | |
| Sal Ammoniac | 3,996 „ | 12,124 „ | |
| Benzol . | 47,550 „ | 305,246 „ | 650,000 poods |
| Heavy and Light Oils . | 902,994 „ | 1,242,215 „ | |
| Goudron . | 1,250,573 „ | 1,539,651 „ | |

Figures sometimes speak more plainly than words: in this case they show that under the Soviet Powers the tar output is 650 tons (about 40,000 poods) per month, which represents an annual output of 480,000 poods; before the Soviets, the Donbas yielded more than three million poods annually. Again, the Soviet industries only show an output of 150 tons of benzol per month or 9,000 poods, which is equivalent to 108,000 poods per annum; before the Bolsheviks, in 1916, the Donbas yielded 650,000 poods.

The conclusion is obvious: the Soviet output represents scarcely a sixth of the output of 1914.

But let us leave the Donbas and its industries, and take an example from a different branch of industry in a different district of the Union.

In Moscow, in the very centre, I have had an opportunity of investigating, without a Bolshevik *cicerone*, one of the most important Russian silk factories, the "Shelkotrust" factory, formerly the

property of *Société Anonyme Franco-Suédoise pour la fabrication de Soie en Russie.*

This factory was started in 1889. In 1911 a wing was added, which almost doubled its capacity; in the same year its steam machinery was replaced by a Diesel engine; in 1914 the power house was increased by three more Diesel engines, and during that period the number of workmen employed had reached 2,000. Now scarcely 350 to 400 workmen are employed there! And this is but another instance of the achievements of the Bolshevik *régime*. But in this instance they cannot say that the destruction has been wrought by the White Armies. Moscow, ever since the beginning of the October Revolution, has remained in the hands of the Soviets and has never passed into any other. The civil war was fought far away from it.

And so throughout the whole of Soviet Russia one observes only such retrogression in the industries. The citation of further examples would only tire the reader.

The reason for this decay is to be found in the fact that the Communist power has conducted and is still conducting its business in the most predatory manner. Under it industry exists only as a means of consuming that patrimony which they have inherited from the capitalist *régime*. But sooner or later even the largest legacy will be exhausted. Before his death Dzerginsky himself (Head of the Tcheka and of the All Union council of people's economics) was forced to admit that "we have exhausted the share capital which we have inherited from the bourgeois. It has become the worse for wear; it must be reconstructed"! ("Pravda," 8-7-26). Rykov, president of the People's commissaries of U.S.S.R., voiced the same opinion when he said that "the time has now arrived when a further development of the industries is only possible by means of re-equipment. Such is the difference between the period on which we are

embarking and the time when *we were living on what we had received from the bourgeoisie*." ("Izvestia," 12-3-26).

This proves that the Bolsheviks are forced to admit that they have dissipated the enormous legacy which they received from the capitalists. It is impossible to carry on work with the same machines for ever: the equipment wears out and has to be renewed. But for every new piece of machinery money is required, and the Bolsheviks do not possess this money for their industries. What money they have they deem better employed in support of strikers in England, in the war in China, in subsidising Communist parties in various countries, in promoting unrest in the colonies, and so on. The Bolsheviks seem always able to find the necessary money for such purposes. But for a rational conduct of the industries in the country over which they reign, and for the provision of work for the workmen over whom they already exercise their power—no! That is of no great importance for the Communist rulers of Soviet Russia. Consequently one of the principal reasons for the decay of Soviet industries is the worn-out state of all industrial equipment which the Bolsheviks fail to keep in proper repair. They create undertakings which can scarcely be said to exist at all, but which have got high-sounding names and staffs of their own, and which are to be found on the list of the most important units of Soviet industry, pretentiously calling themselves "Trusts." The Bolsheviks' own confession on this score is noteworthy. The people's commissary for the workmen-peasants' inspection, Comrade Ordganikidze himself, in one of his speeches ("Pravda," 16-1-27) solemnly informs us that: "For instance, many of the 400 trusts employ less than 500 workmen."

The assets of a big communal trust in Kariagine (Azerbeijan) consists of two manure-carts, two broken water-carts (fire brigade!), a shed, a bath-house, an

electricity-generating station (for 2,000 lamps only), and an Asiatic lime quarry; the salaries of the trust amount to 12,000 roubles per annum (£1,200), and the revenue hardly meets the charges. In such "trusts" it would indeed appear difficult to raise the output.

Another important cause of the ruin of Bolshevik administration is the structure and routine of the industries.

The "Administration," the governing apparatus of the industry, has reached such unnecessarily large dimensions, that at times one wonders which are numerically the stronger, the productive workmen or the administrative officials. The former dictator of industry, the late Dzerjinsky himself, at a conference of the responsible workers of the All-Union council of people's economics in the early summer of 1926, stated that "An important trust spends upon the upkeep of its apparatus something like 40 per cent. of what it pays to its workmen." Naturally, the percentage is in reality a good deal less than that mentioned by Dzerjinsky. Thus we find, in a circular dated April, 1926, addressed by the central committee and the central control commission of the All-Union Communist party to all party organisations and to all the members of the party who are working in economic, commercial and other institutions, the following (*inter alia*): "About 2 milliard roubles (about 1 milliard dollars) are *devoured* annually by our governing and directing organisations." But this money serves no useful purpose: it is largely wasted on all manner of reports, statistics, plans, and general "paper wasting," inevitably involved by the Soviet economic system.

The state, as a rule, is a bad master; it conducts a monopolised industry in too bureaucratic a fashion. Here in the West we have many examples of this, but the Bolshevik system of management is beyond all comparison.

The Soviet reports are measured only "by weight" —and it is usually a substantial weight—from poods to tens of poods! So the report of the South Ural Trust consisted of four volumes, weighing about 2 poods (about 72 pounds); the report of "Mossoukno" (the Moscow cloth trust) comprised eleven volumes, and its weight was proportionally great; the report of "Yougostal" weighed several poods, and so on.

Any alteration in a factory entails a terribly long procedure; the requests pass through many hands and, if not lost on the way, usually come back with the required permission when it is no longer needed. Perhaps nothing better demonstrates the whole "bureaucracy" of the Soviet system of management than the example quoted by comrade Ordjanikidze, the People's commissary of the Workmen-peasant inspection (R.K.I.). At some factory the lavatory had got into such a state that it had to be demolished; this lavatory was figuring in the assets representing the capital at the ridiculous amount of 5 roubles (10*s*.). One would have thought that perhaps the foreman, the manager, or even the director of the trust would have had the right to sanction its demolition, but no! they have not the power to do that sort of thing. According to the rules of Soviet management, even the Supreme Council of People's Economics (V.S.N.H.) has not this right. *It required nothing more nor less than a decree from the Council of People's Commissaries*, the equivalent of a Council of Ministers.

After this I may leave it to the reader to imagine the red-tape, and what a deluge of paper is reigning in the Soviet administrations. Every trifle has to be sanctioned by dozens of employers: for carrying out some of the most ordinary things petitions with dozens of resolutions upon them are required, and they have to go through dozens of hands. As the "seven nurses" had a child without any eyes, so the

industry, and with it the whole prosperity of Soviet Russia perishes and decays in the hands of numerous trustees. Naturally, under such conditions, no rational business exists or can exist. And what is the result? The factories are turning out useless, unsaleable goods, in large quantities, but those which the market requires are turned out in insufficient quantities or not at all. As an example of this we may take rubber "goloshes", an article in the greatest demand in Russia. The Rubber Trust, which deals with this commodity, floods the market with sizes 11, 12, and 13 (large ones) which cannot be sold; yet sizes 8, 9, and 10 (medium foot) cannot be got for love or money: so few of them are made that they are sold out almost immediately.

In all the cities of Soviet Russia, in the very centre, Moscow, in Kharkov, in Rostov, may be seen queues waiting outside the Rubber Trust shops for the sizes 8, 9, and 10 on days when the shops receive new consignments. Some of the people, after having waited for hours, are perhaps lucky enough to get some, but the supplies are sold out quickly, and although you will see a shop stuffed with goloshes there will be a notice posted up to inform you that such and such sizes are not in stock, the very sizes which the population so badly needs.

The unsaleable sizes block up the shops, but the factories still keep manufacturing and distributing them. Why?—Because the work of the factory has been planned in the "centre", the V.S.N.H. The programme clearly indicates that the factory shall turn out so many pairs of such and such a size. The factory would not dare to depart from such a programme, and it is obliged to work at a loss and turn out goods which nobody can use.

I would remind the reader that this applies not only to rubber goods but to every class of goods. In all branches the factories disregard the market and the consumer, and work on a fantastic plan,

quite out of touch with reality. Queues are waiting in Soviet Russia not only for goloshes but for every conceivable and really necessary commodity. Again the fault lies with that wonderful system of Communist rule. Before the Bolsheviks, the factories belonged to Joint Stock Companies, in the case of rubber goods to "Treougolnik" (Russian-American) "Provodnik", "Kaoutchouk", etc. The management of these factories was conducted on what the Bolsheviks considered the worthless plan, the capitalist.

Before the beginning of the season (autumn), they enquired in every district of Russia how many pairs of each size of boots and shoes had been sold. Thus they possessed statistics as to the average sizes required by the population in each of the districts, and the factories sent out an assortment of sizes which corresponded with the needs of the population. The factories worked and earned a profit, and a most substantial one at that. The population had the commodities they required and were sure of their supplies. But it must be remembered that it was not the Soviet Communistic Paradise, and it was not their wonderful system that was in operation! Now under the Communist power in Russia things are much better! The population is without goloshes and the factories are without profits! Truly, one must be expert at destruction to succeed in it as the Communists have done! What happens with goloshes, happens with iron, cotton fabrics, coal, footwear, woollens—in short, with every commodity. Everywhere the triumphs of Soviet economics are staring one in the face!

But there is another difference between Soviet production and the pre-Soviet production: this is in its quality. Formerly a pair of goloshes lasted two to three years—the Soviet goloshes will hardly last a year; formerly all the matches in a box would strike—now it is a matter of luck if one in three will; pencils

were formerly made for the purpose of writing—under the Soviets it is difficult to say what they are made for: as one starts sharpening them the lead breaks off, and the pencil is finished before one has had a chance of touching the paper; or if one has been so fortunate as to sharpen a pencil without breaking the lead, one will find that, instead of leaving a tracing on the paper, it has torn it.

The quality of the majority of Soviet industry's commodities has deteriorated so much that there is no longer any sense in buying them. For instance, at one of the largest glass works in Russia (Constantinovka—Donbas) the window glass produced is uneven, full of blisters, and almost of the colour of a bottle and generally of an impossible quality. I remember once when I had to replace a few window panes in the Mission Offices I was forced in the end to hunt round for pre-revolutionary glass, which is taken from dilapidated and abandoned buildings.

It must be stated as a general rule that the output of Soviet industry is deteriorating terribly as regards quality under the Soviet economics. It manages, in some cases, to attain 100 per cent. of waste and throw-outs. Added to this, the productivity of labour has fallen in a catastrophic manner—the direct result of plant dilapidation.

According to the calculations of the late president of the V.S.N.H. U.S.S.R., Dzerjinsky, whereas in 1913 100 workmen were able to do a certain job, in 1924 it was necessary to employ for a similar job in the woollen and hemp industry, 106; in rubber, 145; in cotton, 148; in leather, 150; in oil, 179; in sugar, 203; in cement, 214; in footwear, 235; in matches, 249; in military chemicals, 292; in tobacco, 318, etc.

Another achievement of the Soviet system in this connection is the tremendous rise in the cost price of commodities. In accordance with statistics for 1924-25, supplied by the "Ekonomitcheskaia Jysn",

(Economic Life) dated 15-9-26, the cost price of commodities exceeded that of the pre-war period by 70 to 100 per cent.; in the same breath the paper states that, in spite of all efforts directed towards lowering the cost price for 1926, it was still increasing. Even in the early months of 1926 the increase in the cost price ran into very imposing figures. Compared with the previous year the cost price had increased by 33 per cent. in the woodworking industry; 16 per cent. in rubber; 19 per cent. in sugar, 8 per cent. in metal, etc. With such an increase of cost price and deterioration of quality in Soviet Russia in the twentieth century a remarkable paradox arises: the easy competition between the small craftsman and the large trustified industries. The small craftsman to-day turns out goods in Russia which are better in quality and cheaper in price than those produced by the factories.

The Soviets have produced a state of affairs almost unbelievable in the twentieth century, which takes us back to the middle ages.

The big factories, producing on a large scale, which should represent the perfection of human technique and human progress, turn out under the Soviets to be a worse and more expensive means of production than the single-handed artisan-craftsman, who uses the most primitive implements for his productions.

Instead of progress, we find that, under the Bolsheviks, industry shows signs of distinct retrogression: it is already centuries behind.

What, then, is there in store for the Soviet industries?

The cost of production will continue to increase in proportion to the dilapidation of the plants, which the Soviets do not trouble to keep in repair. The inheritance which the Bolsheviks received from the bourgeoisie is speedily being consumed, and it is safe to predict that the day is not far off when the

whole of the Communist economic system will collapse like a house of cards.

*That day is much nearer than most people think, and the Bolsheviks themselves realise this better than anyone.*

They feel the crash to be near, they feel the approach of their bankruptcy, the hour of their destruction. They are like the proverbial rats on a sinking ship; they stampede about, trying to find not *the*, but *a* way out.

The late leader of the people's economics of the Soviet Union, Dzerjinsky, alone realised this. He declared: "We are floundering in the meshes of a bureaucratic net. . . . Our methods and our system of government prevent us from the productivity of labour. All reports have been reduced to such a state that they have lost all sense; they have become the direct antithesis of what they should be, and yet we are spending an enormous amount of time on them. . . . We are overloading our trusts and factories with such reports. . . . We are living beyond our means, we are losing vast sums of money, to be calculated not in tens but in hundreds of millions of roubles. . . . We cannot keep up with life; we are losing the tempo. . . . We must alter our system; we must find different ways. . . . *I maintain that the figures supplied to us by the trusts are inflated and fantastic. The statistics which we collect are wholly imaginary—they are legalised lies.*" (Cf. "Izvestia" 14-4-26; "Economic life" No. 156; "Pravda" 154, 1926.)

After the above statement by the dictator of the people's economics of U.S.S.R., Comrade F. Dzerjinsky, there is only one light in which we can consider the figures by which the Bolsheviks attempt to persuade the world that they have improved their economic position until it has nearly reached pre-war level (90 to 95 per cent.).

During nine years of Bolshevik power I endeavoured, whenever I had a chance, to check Soviet

communications and figures: *they were always false.* The Bolsheviks have assiduously carried out the first half of their Hymn, "The International," regarding the "old world"; the old world in Russia they have destroyed; all that was of value in the old country they have annihilated with, one must say, rare mastery; but the "New and better world" that the Hymn promises they have been utterly unable to create.

# CHAPTER III

## THE LIFE OF THE WORKMEN IN SOVIET RUSSIA

IN THE LAST CHAPTER WE HAVE SUMMED UP THE professed "achievements" of the Soviet *régime* in the domain of Russian industry, and we have seen what destruction the Soviet system of government has in reality brought about. An obvious question now presents itself—What, in view of the catastrophic state of industry, is the status of the workman in Soviet Russia?

This is the question that I shall endeavour to answer in this chapter. It is a question which acquires particular importance in view of the fact that the Soviet Government flatters itself that it is the government of the proletarians *par excellence*, and pretends to rule, first of all, in the name of the workmen. It would seem that under the rule of a so-called "Proletarian Soviet Government" the most satisfied element of the country should be the workmen.

But, strange as it may seem, the most dissatisfied class in Soviet Russia is these very *workmen*. I wish to emphasise this fact particularly. I have observed it everywhere, in all branches of industry, in all parts of the country. Everywhere the workmen adopt the most negative attitude towards the Soviet *régime* and the Communists.

However paradoxical it may seem, this is easily explained by a comparison of the status of the workman under Soviet rule with his status before the Revolution. This comparison is the eternal subject of conversation among the workmen in the Soviet Union. Speak to a Russian workman, and, if he

knows you, if only he trusts you ever so little, the first thing that you will hear from him will be something like this: "Formerly people used to say that we were badly off, but I eat and satisfied my hunger and kept my family and sent the children to school. Now they say it is 'our' power, our 'workmen's power', but how the devil can it be called 'workmen's power' when the workman is the first to perish from starvation!" Then comes the enumeration of all the grievances and ills from which he is now suffering.

It is really most astonishing what the Russian workman can put up with under the so-called Workmen's Communistic government of Russia! In no part of the world does the workman live under worse conditions than in Soviet Russia.

Nothing will illustrate this fact better than a few characteristic instances confided to me by some of them. In selecting instances from my "stock" I am I am inclined to give preference to cases which concern workmen who were most actively opposed to the former *régime* in Russia, and who took an active part in its overthrow; we shall see how they fare now and what has been their reward.

Take, for instance, the workman Leonid S——. In 1905 he was a mechanic in the locomotive shed near the station Kavkazskaia on the Wladicaucase Railway. This man drove the train with the revolted workmen who were making for Rostov-on-Don in support of the rising which had broken out there. An active partisan of the 1905 revolution and a prominent secret agent, he expected a great deal from the advent of the Bolsheviks.

What has he got from it—what was the consummation of his expectations? First of all the Communists discharged him from the railway because, when taking part in the 1905 Revolution, he had belonged to the Social-Democratic Party (the Mensheviks). For a very long time the poor chap could not find any work. At last he managed to find

employment at the water works of the city of Rostov, in order to keep alive somehow and avoid starvation. His earnings were not enough even to feed himself and his family. He was working at installing and repairing the water mains and drainage, and upon returning home from his day's work he was obliged to go from door to door offering his services for mending taps and pipes, cleaning blocked-up drains, etc., in order to earn a little extra and preserve himself and his family.

Formerly, before the Bolsheviks came into power, when he was working on the railway, this workman had, by dint of careful saving, succeeded in buying his own house near the station at which he was employed. At that time I had occasion to visit him at his home; it was clean, cosy and gay: contentment dwelled in it.

Now, under the so-called "workmen's power," he finds shelter with his family (wife and three children) in a small, dirty room on the outskirts of the city: want is manifest everywhere in this miserable abode, there are not even enough utensils to enable the whole family to eat or drink at the same time. The room contains three broken-down chairs and a bed which can hardly stand up. Formerly this man was always clean and tidy, careful of his appearance, and always decently and nicely dressed. Now the poor man, has, at great pains, saved enough money to buy himself some secondhand linen sacks with which to make clothes. When I gave him a few empty flour bags which we had at the Mission he could not find words to express his gratitude: these bags enabled him to clothe himself and his family. With tears in his eyes he told me that he could only afford meat once a week, and that often he was compelled to deny milk to the little ones, as it was but seldom that he could afford it. A meatless soup and porridge was the most he could afford under his budget. The cost of each piece of bread had to be carefully weighed.

Once, when giving him relief, I gave him among other things a packet of tea; the poor fellow, as it turned out afterwards, kept it for special occasions only: for ordinary use he dried Acacia flowers as a substitute.[1]

This is what the workmen's delegations should have been taken to see during their visits to Soviet Russia—the kennels in which the workmen have to live under the Soviet *régime*. They should look inside them to ascertain under what terrible conditions the Russian workman is living, to realise what is his true status. But in order to do this it is necessary to see Soviet Russia without any Communist guides; it is necessary to know the language of the country and enjoy the confidence of the people.

But Leonid S—— was not the only one who lost his old job because he had taken an active part in the ranks of the Social-Democrats (Mensheviks) in the rising of 1905 at Rostov-on-Don. We will take the case of Iankel K——, a locksmith at the largest Russian agricultural machinery works "Aksay". Iankel K—— had worked at these works ever since his childhood, for more than 20 years: with the advent of the Bolsheviks he was dismissed from the works for his allegiance to the Social-Democratic party, in spite of his declaration that he had left and foresworn it; he cannot get work anywhere and has to live on what he can earn by repairing locks and gates. I could mention hundreds of such instances in the city of Rostov alone, but I must not dwell on them too long

Let us look at the life of a workman in regular employment, an average workman. We will take a different branch of industry. At the Don State tobacco factory named after Rosa Luxemburg (formerly Asmolov) there worked—and he may be working there even now—a man named Paul K——. I have known him since 1911. This is his story as he told

[1] In Russia tea is taken on all occasions when we, in the West, use coffee. Tea is in fact the national beverage.

it to me: "Well, now I earn 58 roubles (116s.), the union rate, but do I ever get paid in full? On pay day I go up to the pay-desk and there they begin to make deductions from my salary. There is the subscription to the professional union, the newspapers to which I am forced to subscribe; here is 50 kopeks contribution to the Aviohim (Aviation chemistry), 40 kopeks for M.O.P.R. (International organisation for the help of revolutionaries); then there are some foreign strikers, the Mestkom (Factory Communist Committee)—but it is impossible to enumerate them all! At best I receive 45 roubles, but usually less. But you try and refuse! Say that you do not want the papers; that you do not want to know anything about Aviohim or foreign strikers.

"What does the protest result in? One is sent to prison for this very offence, another is discharged. Three friends of mine tried it, and they are looking for work to this very day: nowhere does the works' 'cell' allow them to be taken on. The result is that one has to keep quiet and take the 45 roubles which one may be lucky enough to receive out of the 58 which are due. And what can you buy with them, these Soviet roubles? You know yourself what prices are ruling nowadays! What used at one time to cost one rouble now costs three or even five. Before the Bolsheviks came into power I was earning 65 roubles, but not a penny was ever stopped; you were promised 65 roubles and at the end of the month you received 65 roubles. And what a life it was in those days! Wasn't everything cheap compared with to-day? When you come to think of it, bread at 3 kopeks per pound and now 10 or 11 kopeks even for black bread; butter was 20 kopeks a pound, to-day you've got to pay a whole rouble; and so it is with everything; as for clothes, they are quite out of the question. How, then, can I live on my 45 roubles? Besides, the life we workmen have to lead now is, to say the least of it, rotten. A fat lot of good this

'workmen's' rule has done us—it spells starvation to us workmen. And what used they to say? 'We shall do everything for the workman, everything shall be his; you shall live in the palaces of the bourgeois—everything will be your own!' Fine palaces we've got now. At one time I used to pay 10 roubles a month for my lodgings and knew no worry; now, the Communists say, 'We shall give the workman cheap lodgings, according to a special tariff.' Yes, they are cheap indeed!—may they perish for such cheapness! I am now paying 8 roubles per month for the same lodgings: it seems cheaper, but did I formerly have to pay for water and drainage? I knew nothing at all about it! Now I have got to pay 5 or 6 roubles every month, and in the summer, when more water is used, I may have to pay a full 10 roubles. What do you think of it? Are my lodgings cheaper now than they used to be? I reckon they're one-and-a-half times if not twice as dear. So much for their 'palaces'!"

But this workman, compared with others, was quite well-off. How does the poor man fare who does not earn the 45 roubles which Paul K—— was earning?

A greaser on the railway, for instance, gets 18 to 20 roubles per month. How can he live on that? I know a greaser on the Moscow-Kursk Railway who has a wife and four children to support. He gets 18 roubles 90 kopeks per month. But this is not even sufficient for the bread they eat. He is starving, and evidently curses up hill and down dale that professed "workmen's" power which has condemned him and his family to starvation. His position is a terrible one!

Nothing so condemns the Soviet *régime* in Russia as the status of the workman under their rule. But these are not all the troubles of the Russian workman under the Soviet rule. Not only does he not receive in full even the miserable wage to

which he is entitled, but often he does not even receive it punctually. At the factories, at the works, and in all Soviet institutions in general the wages are often paid out long after they have fallen due. Sometimes the workman only gets his wages months after they are due. The January wages are paid in March, the September wages in January. It can be safely stated that in Soviet Russia a workman very rarely receives his wages on the day when they are due, or even without at least a month's delay.

There was a case in Moscow in 1925 when the workmen from the textile works situated in the suburbs, after not receiving their wages for month after month, became restless, and in spite of their fear of repressions declared that they would work no longer. They stipulated a time limit of only a few days within which they demanded payment. It so happened that at the time the treasury of the financial department was absolutely empty. The "powers" became excited as the workmen numbered several tens of thousands, and furthermore the disturbance was taking place very near the centre, Moscow, and might easily become known to foreign representatives. In fact there was a chance that circumstances might take such a turn as even to threaten the very existence of the central power. The passions of the workmen were roused. Comrade Kalinin, the so-called "All-Union elder," who went to argue with the workmen, was received with whistling, booing, and a shower of stones and had to flee in a motor car under the escort of the Tchekists. The Bolsheviks realised that money alone would save them, and they found it! "How?" the reader will probably ask. This is how they found it:—

The G.P.U. sent out a number of secret agents to the "Black Bourse" in Moscow, who set about selling gold and foreign currencies cheaply. The first day the "operators" of the Black Bourse were

somewhat frightened and held back, but after a few small trial operations they seemed to think that "business was safe". The following day a considerable quantity of hidden private capital was produced for the purpose of buying foreign currency. Jews appeared in the square near the Ilinsky Gate with portmanteaus full of Tchervontzy (the new Soviet currency), and their attorneys walked up to them, took parcels of money, and proceeded to effect the exchange. But now came the "stage effect"! . . . All of a sudden all the streets adjacent to the Ilinsky Gate were surrounded by the troops of O.G.P.U. and all "citizens" caught in the ring were only allowed out of it after a close inspection of their documents for money.

I witnessed what took place in the square at the Ilinsky Gate from a window overlooking the Ilinsky thoroughfare from the corner of the Marosseika. Between the Ilinsky thoroughfare and the Nogin Square (formerly Warsaw Square) people were dropping portmanteaus and bags and throwing money out of their pockets in order to save their lives: the Tchervontzy was strewn all over the square, especially near the Plevna monument, like autumn leaves. About 100 people were arrested. But *the workmen were paid the same night.*

When, a few months later, I found myself an inmate of the Boutirky prison, I met there some of the "business men" of the Black Bourse who had been caught on that day. But—and this is important—I also met there some of the workmen from the factories (Ivano-Voznessensk, etc), where the trouble had taken place. It appears that, when the other workmen had quietened down somewhat, the ringleaders were arrested. Six of those whom I met in the Boutirky prison were sentenced to five years' exile in the Narym and Touroukhtan districts (Siberia). They told me that, as far as they were able to judge from the people they met at the various

enquiries, some 85 persons had been arrested and condemned by G.P.U.

A similar disturbance occurred in Rostov-on-Don. Not having sufficient money to pay the workmen, and fearing trouble, the Bolsheviks embarked upon a similar adventure, again successfully! Comrade Shatov, manager of the Rostov Branch of the State Bank (Gosbank) invited all the brokers who worked on the "Black Bourse" (names were supplied by the Plenipotentiary Representative of O.G.P.U.) and commissioned them to sell foreign currency and gold coins of the Imperial *régime*. As soon as the operation had been carried through, the brokers were arrested and G.P.U. forced them to betray the names of the persons to whom the currency had been sold. The purchasers, in their turn, were arrested, the currency confiscated and safely restored to the strong room of the State Bank. One of the brokers, Rosenblum, who refused to disclose the names of the persons who had bought the currency from him, was banished to Narym for a sentence of five years. He perished there. In this way G.P.U. sometimes fills the empty Soviet treasuries when the workmen have to be paid.

Another curious instance of a similar operation by the Soviet Powers took place in Rostov. In the heat of the season, when the grain has to be loaded, there was no money with which to pay the stevedores, who threatened to stop loading. Thereupon the far-sighted manager of the Don Communal Economic Department, Comrade Gourevitch, without much hesitation *put up for auction some dozens of houses which had previously been nationalised, i.e. taken away from their owners by the Soviet Powers.*—An auction sale of looted property!

But sometimes the Communists are unable to obtain money even in this way, and in such cases the wages are paid in orders for the purchase of goods drawn on the State Co-operatives. In the

Donbas, in the majority of cases, the workmen are paid in this fashion. This would not matter so much if the Co-operatives had those goods in stock which are required, but they stock scent, toilet powders and such-like articles, and no bread, no sugar, no boots and none of the necessities which a workman needs. The result is that the workman is obliged to take these orders to a private speculator who only allows him half or one-third of the value. A certain workman, well known to me, working at the Gorlovsky mines, had to sell the orders he had received in lieu of salary in order to attend his mother's funeral, who had died in Taganrog (some 100 miles away). For 18 roubles in orders he received 5 roubles in money and 6 lbs. of bread, but as this amount was not sufficient to pay his fare he had to sell the boots off his feet together with the orders; somehow, though barefooted, he managed to reach Taganrog.

Thus it will be seen that wages are paid in orders for the purchase of commodities which are worth less than half their face value.

But having touched on the Donbas it is only right to describe the terrible conditions under which the coal miners there live at the present time. Most of the miners live in barracks which are falling to pieces and let in water. Several families live together. I have known cases of 9 or 10 people living in a room barely large enough for two. If all were to sleep at the same time there would be no room on the floor. Some live in earthen huts. Men and women live together in the barracks, without any partitions. Quarrelling, squalor, and open, impudent vice are the terrible sights that meet the eyes of the visitor. Incidentally these conditions have brought about a terrible spread of venereal diseases.

For example 200 miner women were brought from the Donbas to Rostov-on-Don to sort out the coal by way of a rest at the depots of E.P.O. (the united consumers' society). They were lodged at

the former cardboard-box factory, Souvorovskaia, No. 19. Two or three weeks after their arrival they were examined by a lady-doctor, N. Perelman, from the sanitary committee. The inspection showed that only 6 per cent. were not infected with venereal disease.

The material position of the Russian workman under Soviet rule, in comparison with pre-revolution times or with the workman of Western Europe, is truly a sorry one. But yet these workmen, who are nearly dying from starvation, are sending millions to English strikers—and not to them only!

The reader already knows by what means these millions are extracted from the beggarly earnings of the Russian workman; we have seen it in the case of Paul K——.

But there is still another question to be cleared up, that of the many thousand manifestations and demonstrations of protest of the Russian proletariat.

The Soviet Press and also the foreigners who have visited Soviet Russia speak of grandiose manifestations by the workmen on the days of revolutionary holidays and anniversaries, and demonstrations of protest against either "The Imperialistic policy of the powers in China" or "The war in Syria and Morocco" or, as of late, against the supposed "English Anti-Soviet policy". If anything happens in the world which displeases the Soviet Government or the Communists, a wave of protesting demonstrations immediately rolls across U.S.S.R. Are these manifestations and demonstrations realities, then, or are they lies spread by the Soviets? No, these demonstrations do actually take place. Foreigners, who have seen them, speak of the great numbers of people who take part in them; they wonder at the huge masses of the demonstrators: many even begin to believe, on that account, that the Russian people are really backing up the Soviets. In order to understand these manifestations it is

necessary to know how these masses of people are collected and why they are so numerous.

Unfortunately this is not generally known in Western Europe, and yet it is essential that it should be known in order to understand the attitude of the Russian people towards Communism, in whose power they find themselves. The Russian workman, if only for the reason that his material well-being has deteriorated under the Soviet power, would certainly not attend these demonstrations on his own accord. And yet he does attend them—for the simple reason that *his attendance at the manifestations is compulsory*.

Anybody who fails to turn up without giving a valid reason (in case of illness a doctor's certificate must be produced) is entered upon the "black list" of the Communist "cell" of the factory or institution where he is employed; for a second offence he is dismissed. But such repressions are applied not only to workmen and employees. For instance in Rostov-on-Don (and for that matter all over U.S.S.R.) all hunters must attend the manifestations "in a body", the whole association, with their dogs and guns; if a member fails to turn up he is immediately excluded and forfeits his right to hunt.

What a picture! Naturally workmen who did not want to attend these demonstrations at first endeavoured to find loopholes or "sneaked" away as best they could. For instance, the workmen would answer the roll-call before the demonstration, and, after having got into formation, would proceed to the meeting-point, but less than half their numbers would arrive there, many succeeding in deserting. After that the Communists resorted to more severe measures, and now a demonstration is carried out somewhat on these lines: there is first a roll-call at the factory or institution where the men are employed, and here the flags and banners with slogans are

distributed; there is a second roll-call at the meeting-point of the demonstration; after a march-past through the streets they return to their place of employment, where the flags and banners are returned and a third roll-call takes place. Only after this third roll-call are the poor fellows allowed to go home.

The Russian worker has sometimes to toil harder on a holiday than on any other day of the week. In military fashion he has to cover miles on a hard pavement, shout out Communist slogans, and sing revolutionary hymns and songs; in short he has to employ every means to prove his adherence to the Communist power, in order not to be thrown out in the street to perish of starvation with his family. In this respect also the Communists take the fullest advantage of the workmen, who are in their absolute power, to make foreign countries believe that the people are at one with them.

During my stay in Soviet Russia I had occasion to witness dozens of such demonstrations every year and to see all the preparations for them. By way of illustrating the preparations for a demonstration of this sort I will cite an incident which took place in Rostov-on-Don at the time when the Soviet ambassador to Italy, Comrade Vorovsky, was murdered in Switzerland. The news reached Rostov on the eve of a holiday. The population heard of it at about 10 to 11 in the morning from special editions of the newspapers. The same day the evening papers were full of attacks upon Switzerland and descriptions and details of a huge demonstration of protest which had taken place in Rostov-on-Don in the afternoon. The speeches made during this demonstration were reported verbatim; they contained strong attacks upon the Swiss Government and voiced the deep and spontaneous indignation of the masses at the murder of Comrade Vorovsky. The papers "Labour Don" and "Soviet South",

published in Rostov, devoted the whole of their front pages to a detailed description of the demonstration against the "Western murderers"; they gave full details of the conditions under which the demonstration had taken place and lists of workmen from various works who had taken part in it.

But the population was mystified. People were asking each other whether they had been present at the demonstration or had seen it. Nobody, absolutely nobody, had seen anything at all resembling a demonstration! The workmen of the various works read that their works were marching with such and such a banner, with such and such a slogan, in such and such an order—but they had done nothing of the sort and knew nothing about it!

Immediately after the holidays everybody learned what had happened. It appears that *the demonstration was to have taken place* before the holidays, but there had not been sufficient time before the closing of the works, factories, and institutions to organise it. The workmen and employees had had time to disperse peacefully to their homes. But the papers had printed the *report, which had been sent to them in advance, of how the demonstration had taken place*—although there had in fact been no demonstration!

Only after the holidays was it possible to correct this discrepancy. When the workmen and employees came to their work in the morning they were immediately formed into columns and served out with banners and slogans; the demonstration took place as *described in the papers beforehand*, and the speeches which had already been reported in the papers were made. There was but a *trifling* difference: it happened 1½ days after the report had appeared in the Soviet Party Press.

I leave it to the reader to form his own opinion of those "spontaneous protests" by thousands and even millions of Russian proletarians and to draw

his own conclusions. I can only add that the hundreds of Russian workmen who have had "heart to heart" talks with me are unanimous in their indignation at these compulsory demonstrations. They say quite plainly: "Now it is worse than serfdom. Formerly I could rest on a holiday: I could spend such a day with my wife and children; but now, whenever there is a holiday, I have got to march from morning to night. They say that we are in power now—'the dictatorship of the Proletariat'—but, if you ask me, it is 'Dictatorship over the Proletariat'. Who is tortured more than we are? . . ."

We have seen under what conditions those workmen live who are in regular employment. But this study would not be complete without mention of the masses of the workmen who are out of work. In Soviet Russia to-day there is a majority of unemployed. According to official Soviet statistics published by the "Gosplan" (State planning Committee) on the 1st January, 1927, 1,271,000 unemployed had been registered at 256 Labour exchanges. To this must be added an enormous number of unemployed youths. According to the paper "Komsomolska Pravda", No. 270 for 1926, there are over a million youths in the cities and townships who do not study or work anywhere. The same paper points out that to this number must be added 250,000 inmates of children's homes. From this it follows that the official Soviet figures prove the number of unemployed to be about 2½ millions, a far greater number than that of the employed which the Soviet statistics quote at 1,900,000.

But it must be noted here that the Bolsheviks do not register all the unemployed at the Labour exchanges (I have satisfied myself on this score dozens of times); therefore the number of unemployed is in reality far greater. According to data in my possession it must be somewhere near the 5 million mark. Further, it must be stated that, owing to the continuous

deterioration of Soviet industries, the number of unemployed is steadily increasing; according to the statistics of the Gosplan of U.S.S.R., from October 1st, 1926, to January 1st, 1927, the number of the unemployed increased by 19 per cent.

The Bolsheviks take advantage of the prevalence of unemployment in Soviet Russia, and they force the workmen to submit unconditionally to such mockeries as have already been enumerated: reductions from their wages for the assistance of various foreign strikers and fostering the Communist revolution in western countries, and compulsory attendance at all kinds of demonstrations necessary to the Soviet Power.

A workman in Soviet Russia dare not protest for fear of losing his livelihood, for unemployment means nothing less than starvation. Furthermore, I doubt whether it is known in the West that Soviet Russia is about the only country in the world where the workmen have not the right to strike, not even for the protection of their economic interests. If a strike is organised at some government enterprise the strikers are looked upon as counter-revolutionaries and are arrested by G.P.U. as such. Masses of workmen are now languishing in the O.G.P.U. dungeons for such offences. On the other hand, in the rare private enterprises, where the workmen as a rule get better pay and are satisfied, they are forced to strike against their own interests.

To illustrate this we may take the case of the leather strap factory "Util-Koj" in Taganrog. The Professional Union of the city of Taganrog *actually forced* the workmen of this factory to go on strike. In my presence the workmen came to tender their apologies to their employer, who was greatly liked: they stated that they were well satisfied with everything but were being forced to strike by the Union. When the factory closed down and these same workmen were out of work, the Union refused to

find them new jobs. The solution of this riddle may be found in the fact that this factory was becoming a serious competitor of the Taganrog State Leather Works (formerly the Société Anonyme de Tanneries d'Azoff). The private factory paid the workmen better and turned out commodities which were cheaper in price and better in quality. When the workmen found out for whose benefit the Taganrog Professional Union had thrown them out into the street, they finished up by giving some representatives of the Professional Union a sound thrashing.

Before closing this description of the workman's status in Soviet Russia it is necessary to discuss the opportunities afforded foreign workmen for work in U.S.S.R.

The Soviet Government invites foreign workmen to come and work in Soviet Russia, particularly highly-specialised artisans, as there is a terrible shortage in skilled workmen.

In my country, Belgium, I know of any amount of such invitations sent to my countrymen. I was able personally to warn many of the danger of accepting such invitations from the Soviets, but naturally I was unable to warn all. In France it has been observed that similar invitations are also being received from the Bolsheviks.

In order to warn those to whom similar invitations are addressed by the Soviets, promising high wages, facilities, and privileges, I shall cite several cases taken from the experience of foreign workmen who were fools enough to trust to the promises of the Soviets and went to work in U.S.S.R.

First let me take the case of Willy Paar, an Austrian workman, specialist in motor-car body work and aeroplane fuselages, who was invited to work in U.S.S.R. In Vienna Paar signed an agreement to work at the "Junkers" Works in Fily (about 5 miles from Moscow): he was promised about 500 roubles (£50) per month, a salary that he had never dreamt

of earning before. Upon arrival in Moscow, at the Baltic (former Windaw) station, hardly had he had time to leave the train when some man accosted him, photograph in hand; he looked at the photo and then at Paar and politely asked him, "Are you Wilhelm Paar who have come to work at the Junkers Works?" On hearing that he was, the man declared that he had been sent by the works to meet him and that a motor-car was waiting for him. Paar was delighted at such an attitude on the part of the works administration towards him, but not for long. Instead of being taken to the Junkers Works he was taken to Loubianka No. 2, the O.G.P.U., where he was arrested. The poor fellow could not understand why. But he was abruptly told: "There is no need for you to understand: it will be better for you if you do not understand. . . . . The works have engaged you to work. Very good—we know that, but, unfortunately, you will not have a chance to work."

Paar spent nearly six months in the O.G.P.U. prison without knowing or understanding the reason. After that he was taken, under escort, to the Latvian frontier and expelled from U.S.S.R. territory. I know this workman personally, but if anybody would like to hear from himself his impressions of Soviet Russia, let them write to him: his address is: W. Paar, 5, Stingergasse, Vienna XIV, Austria.

But one fact is not sufficient, let us take another: Edward Rimington, an Englishman, a draftsman mechanic, is an energetic workman and knows his business to perfection. This young man was invited in May, 1924, to work as a Diesel specialist at the Moscow Silk Trust. The administration of the works were full of praise about him, but unfortunately he was not a favourite with the Communists of the factory and he was arrested, and after several months in the O.G.P.U. dungeons (only the energetic interference of his Government saved him from being shot) he was sent out of U.S.S.R. under escort.

I shall quote here a few sentences from a letter of Rimington's addressed to me, in which he describes the attitude he has observed on the part of the Russian workmen towards Communism: "I soon noticed that most of the workmen did not like the Soviet Power and fiercely hated the Communists. The Communists occupied all the best posts and were earning far more than the ordinary workmen. The Communists at the factory where I worked indulged in drunkenness and vice and bossed everybody, whereas the ordinary workmen worked and suffered terribly." If anybody wishes to ascertain what impressions Edward Rimington has brought away of his stay in the Soviet Paradise and of work at Soviet factories they are welcome to write to him, mentioning my name, at the following address: Edward Rimington, 4, Goppsal Street, Leicester, England.

If by any chance there should be a workman among my readers who contemplates going to Soviet Russia to work there I would particularly recommend him to write to the addresses I have indicated (if he wishes it I will supply him with many others) in order to ascertain from his fellow workers the truth about the country before deciding upon such a step.

## CHAPTER IV

### WHAT COMMUNISM HAS DONE FOR THE PEASANTRY

RUSSIA IS MAINLY AN AGRICULTURAL COUNTRY; THE peasantry form about 90 per cent. of the population of the whole country. In view of this fact one can judge pretty well what Communism has done for the country's population in general by considering what it has done for the peasantry.

Let us examine briefly what the Soviet *régime* has promised to the peasant and what it has actually given him.

The Communists did indeed make great promises. When they called upon the peasants to help them to establish the Soviet Power, they promised that, when it was established, the peasants should receive all the lands which had belonged to the landowners and the government.

One of the principal baits of the Bolsheviks was their promise, if not quite to abolish, at least materially to reduce the taxation which the peasants had to pay; this reduction was to come into operation directly the Bolsheviks came into power.

What, then, have the Soviets done for the peasants in the way of land since their accession to power? Having seized the land from the landowners the Bolsheviks, as it turns out, have not kept their word about handing it over *in toto* to the peasants: the best land never reached the peasants, as on the best estates the Bolsheviks started all kinds of Soviet breeding and seed-growing establishments (called sovhos, plemhos, semhos, etc.). All these establish-

ments are merely sinecures for the local Communist potentates.

According to Soviet statistics 20 per cent. of the land in U.S.S.R. which was formerly the property of the private landowners is now in the hands of these Soviet establishments. Twenty per cent. of the land, and the best of the land at that, has failed to reach the peasant. But, stranger still, the Soviets, who in the first instance deprived the landowners of their estates and farms, now distribute these to "meritorious revolutionaries" for "lifelong enjoyment" (N. A. Movozov, etc.); that is to say, they sympathetically create new landowners of their own. Even if the lands and estates thus given away "for services rendered" do not amount to very much, nevertheless it is characteristic, and noteworthy for that reason.

Apart from this, part of the land taken away from Russian landowners was given to "foreign" concessionaries: for instance the Krupp concession in the Don region, comprising several thousand dessatines (1 dessatine = 2·7 acres).

But even this is not all: in the black belt in the south, Russia's granary, the land allocated to the peasants, has been reduced. During the hard years of famine, when the peasant was unable to sow the whole of the land at his disposal, he was taxed also on the uncultivated portion of the land he owned. The peasant was unable to pay such a taxation and consequently part of the land was confiscated (Kouban, Don, Twer regions and the Stavropol government, etc.). This is the way in which the Bolsheviks have kept their promise as regards the land question. Now let us enquire how the Bolsheviks have kept the second part of their promise—the reduction of taxation.

In the early stages of their power the Bolsheviks endeavoured fully to realise the dream of a "commune". They took away from the peasant all the produce which his land and labours yielded, promising

to give him in exchange the articles which their industries were supposed to turn out. They took away from him everything that could be taken away, but in exchange they gave nothing. The peasants were rationed: they were only allowed to retain sufficient to keep themselves until the next crop and sufficient for sowing purposes, and even this was sometimes denied them. When I was living in the country, this despoiling of the peasants took place before my own eyes. Apart from the grain, which they usually cleared right out, the Bolsheviks took away all they could. In the Kouban district, for every cow the peasants had to give away 2 lbs. of butter and 5 lbs. of cheese per month; for each hen 5 eggs per month; for horned cattle they had to pay 11 lbs. of meat per annum (live weight); out of three pigs one was taken away; the same with sheep, etc.

The huge supplies which the Bolsheviks collected in this way perished in their incompetent hands. The butter, not having been salted, turned sour; the cheese rotted; the commandeered pigs, taken away in the height of summer heat, were driven to cities hundreds of miles distant and, of course, unaccustomed as they were to such treatment, perished by the roadside in hundreds. Colossal food supplies were perishing, and as a result the Bolsheviks brought the country to such a state of famine as had never been experienced before, which cost the Russian people several millions of innocent human victims.

About 6 to $6\frac{1}{2}$ million Russians perished during the famine, solely through the fault of the Communists. A gruesome achievement indeed!

The famous leader of Communism, Lenin, was the first to recognise the bankruptcy of the "commune" and sharply altered the course of the Soviet Communist ship by publishing the decree concerning the New Economic Policy (N.E.P. for short).

From collecting taxation from the peasantry, at first calculated in grain value, the Communists gradually passed to direct taxation in money. They created the so-called "Sole Peasants' Tax". This tax was unspeakably burdensome to the peasants, yet it was unable completely to satisfy the omnivorous Moloch of the Soviet Power. Year by year the Bolsheviks go on increasing the taxes payable by the peasants; the following table will satisfy us on that score: The peasantry has paid towards State and local budgets:

| | |
|---|---|
| In the 1923-24 budget year . . | 557 million roubles |
| In the 1924-25 budget year . . | 728 million roubles |
| In the 1925-26 budget year . . | 925 million roubles |

(the figure for the last period is officially estimated, "Pravda" dated 18–12–25.).

The Soviet Power, receiving no revenue from the industries it has nationalised, is thus forced to draw the whole of its revenue from the peasants.

In order to squeeze out of them by some means or other anything above the official taxation, the Soviet Power makes use of its status of monopoly in industry to cheapen artificially the produce of the peasant as compared with industrial goods. To-day the peasant cannot get for his grain even a third of what he got before the advent of the Bolsheviks.

The following figures, taken from Soviet statistics, speak for themselves:

Value in Pounds of Rye Flour:

| Commodities | 1912 | 1925 | Aug. 1926 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Printed cotton fabrics (per yard) . . | 5.5 | 10.47 | 14.0 |
| Boots (pair) . . . . . | 22.6 | 427.9 | 449.0 |
| Cast iron utensils (lb.) . . . . | 2.7 | 4.9 | 5.0 |
| Salt (lb.) . . . . . | 0.4 | 0.8 | etc. |

The result was that, instead of the taxes payable by the peasants being reduced, the Soviet Power brought about an enormous increase, and they are not only shearing the peasant like a sheep but endeavouring to pull two skins off him.

The peasant is endeavouring, as far as possible, to return to his natural way of managing, in order to protect himself against Soviet exploitation. In collecting the taxes from the peasant the Bolsheviks do not concern themselves with his ability to pay them. The taxes must be paid at all costs. A few examples will serve to show how the Bolsheviks collect their taxes:

I knew a certain peasant, Alexis P——, who resided in the stanitza Staroleoushkovska, Black Sea region. He owed 28 roubles tchervontzy arrears of taxes; the poor man had just lost his horse, and as it was a very busy time when they were ploughing for the "winter sowing," he was forced to buy another. When he was called before the executive committee of the stanitza he pleaded to be allowed time in which to pay, but in vain; he was told that he must pay by 12 o'clock on the following day. Alexis P—— was quite unable to find the money by the following day; when he returned home from ploughing there was a militiaman at his house already waiting for him. Upon being told that he was unable to pay the taxes, the militiaman produced a paper authorising him to seize the defaulter's goods. The result was that the horse which he had just bought was taken away from him and sold by public auction to pay the taxes and the fines which had accumulated. The peasant was left without a horse at the height of the ploughing season.

A similar case occurred at the stanitza Kanibolotska, not far from the village where that already quoted took place. A tax was claimed from the Cossack Roman K—— amounting to 218 roubles, which he disputed, pointing out that his sown surface was less

by several dessatines than that stated by the Finance department. Protestation proved to be quite useless. The finance inspector refused even to listen; he pointed out to K—— that according to Soviet law a man though charged a fantastic tax was bound to pay it first and afterwards to claim a refund. As K—— had only paid 130 roubles, the amount which according to the law should at most have been claimed from him in accordance with the surface which he actually cultivated, his goods and chattels were sold under the hammer for a mere trifle, and all he had left was an empty hut.

Three months after he had handed in a petition regarding the unlawful assessment, there came from the Eisk Finance department a reply, acknowledging the justice of K——'s arguments and ordering the refund of the excess taken from K——, which amounted to 88 roubles. K—— obtained the refund, but all his belongings had already been sold. In order to recover 88 roubles, property worth at the most conservative estimate 300 roubles was taken from him in spite of the acknowledged illegality of the claim; it is a well-known fact that under the hammer things fetch nearly nothing. Who will compensate Roman K—— for the loss he has sustained through the error of the Finance department? One thing is certain—it will not be the Soviet power! But the collection of taxes does not always end in a sale of property: sometimes it takes a much more tragic turn.

For instance, at the stanitza Rojdestvenska, Caucasian part of the Kouban-Black Sea district, the population, owing to partial failure of the crops, was unable to pay the taxes in full. A general assembly of the inhabitants petitioned for a reduction, but the reply received from the government office was that if the taxes were not paid in full, and punctually, decisive measures would be taken and the taxes collected forcibly. The inhabitants did not pay the taxes, for the simple reason that they had

nothing to pay them with; as already explained the stanitza was suffering from a failure of the crops and the inhabitants were seriously considering whether the stocks available would be sufficient to see them through until the next harvest. A week after the date appointed by the Bolsheviks as the latest that payment was to be made, seeing that the population was not paying up, they started reprisals. The stanitza was declared under martial law and a punitive expedition of about 15 to 20 men was sent there; on their arrival they took hostages and warned the population that "if the taxes were not paid in full, and immediately . . . every fifth hostage, by lot, shall be shot!" Some of the inhabitants collected the few remaining pence they were able to lay hands on, but obviously this was not sufficient to cover the whole amount claimed. *All the hostages were shot.*

This provoked a general rising of the population of the stanitza; all local Communists were massacred, together with the members of the punitive expedition who had been unable to escape; only 2 or 3 escaped, and these, on reaching the Tikhoretzka stanitza, some 8 miles away, roused a panic amongst the powers there by their report of the rising. Immediately the nearest garrison was ordered to send two trains of troops to the Rojdestvensky stanitza (mostly Tartar troops), and from Rostov there arrived detachments of "troops for special destinations."

In a stream of blood the rising was finally quelled. Apart from those shot down, dozens of the inhabitants who had escaped being shot were arrested by G.P.U. and subsequently banished, some to the Solovetzky Island and others to Siberia. The property of those shot and arrested was taken in payment of the taxes.

Not only in the Kouban, but also on the Don (Salsky district, August, 1925, and Hopersky), in the Stavropol Govt., in the Ukraine (Starobelsy, Kharkov Govt.), and in the North-West district (Ostrov,

early 1926) I have known similar instances of taxes being collected by shootings. From other and far-away parts of U.S.S.R. I repeatedly heard of similar occurrences. Later, when I found myself in the various Soviet prisons, I met peasants who had received sentences of three, five, and even ten years Solovetsy or Siberia for "counter-revolutionary activities," i.e. inability to pay their taxes.

In April, 1926, I was confined in the prison of the City of Pskov (called a work and correction house) and there were with me 9 peasants imprisoned for non-payment of taxes. During the same month I was moved to the prison in Ostrov, and there I found 17 peasants imprisoned for the same crime. When I come to describe the Soviet dungeons I shall again refer to the peasants, victims of the Red terror who in large numbers are serving sentences in Soviet prisons.

The taxes are at times so heavy that a peasant, after having paid them, literally finds himself with scarcely a shirt on his back. Here is an instance of how the taxation has absolutely ruined a promising man: Akim K——, a peasant of the Riasan Government, before the advent of the Bolsheviks worked away from home as a joiner in Rostov; his wife remained at home and managed his small and simple homestead. Akim was working in town in order to acquire the means for buying a horse and a cow to strengthen and improve his estate when he came home. By the time the Bolsheviks came into power, Akim had already saved enough to buy two horses and two cows. As soon as the railway services had been restored, he engaged a freight truck and departed with his horses and cows and some miscellaneous property "for the land".

I saw Akim before he left; he was leaving full of the rosiest hopes, glad to be able to return to his land. In 1926, what was my astonishment to see Akim in Rostov again! and in what a state! Dirty

and in rags, Akim came to me to enquire whether I could give him any work. When I enquired about his home, his land, and the reason why he was again taking up joinery work he broke out with a regular deluge of curses against the Soviet *régime*, the Communists, and everything that appertained to them.

It appears that because he had two horses and two cows Akim was deemed a *koulak*, and the Bolsheviks therefore taxed him in such a manner that not only did he lose his two horses and two cows, but even his house and everything in it was sold to meet the taxes. Akim left his wife with his brother Ivan for the time being and somehow managed to get back to Rostov, partly on foot and partly by hanging on to the couplings of goods trains. He lost absolutely all desire to farm. This is what he told me himself:

"They have taught me, they have taught me in the best possible manner, those Bolsheviks, how to run a peasant's homestead. I shall not forget it for a long time. These cursed Bolsheviks have deliberately strangled me with their taxation. If it had only been one tax!—but I had to pay cultural dues as well. I had horses; on the tenth day the Soviets compelled me to take a turn at carrying the mails. Even the mails would not have been so bad, but apart from that, right in the middle of the week they take you from your fields to cart some passing commissary —to take him perhaps some 20 or 30 miles; and that at the busiest time in the fields! They take you away, and your grain and your hay lie rotting in the rain because they will not give you a chance to cart it away. What can you do under such conditions! Naturally under their rule everything goes to the devil, everything is destroyed . . ."

The Bolsheviks number every peasant who is more or less successful among the *koulaks*.[1] To be deemed a *koulak* is certain ruination for a peasant. The Soviet Power persecutes the *koulak* by all possible

[1] Rich peasants usually anti-Socialists

means, political repressions, incredible taxation and super-taxation, spreading hostility among his fellow peasants, and by many other means.

The word *koulak* in Communist parlance is so elastic that every peasant who carries on successfully may be included in this category. If he buys a second horse, he becomes a *koulak*: if he cultivates an extra dessatine of his soil, he becomes a *koulak*: if he keeps two cows, again he is a *koulak*. And since it is most dangerous under the Soviet *régime* to be deemed a *koulak* a peasant is afraid to develop his holding. If he has ten dessatines he will only sow on five, producing no more than is absolutely necessary to preserve himself and his family; if there is a good crop he could buy a horse or a cow, but he does nothing of the sort—he is afraid of being considered a *koulak*. The result is that the peasants are afraid of progress; and yet the prosperity of the peasantry in Russia, an essentially agricultural country, means the prosperity of the country.

This is the real stumbling-block of the Bolshevik rule. This is the reason why any improvement is impossible, why any increase in the prosperity of the country under the Bolsheviks is out of the question. This is the vicious circle under the Soviet *régime*.

Here also is to be found the reason why Russia, formerly the granary of Europe, can hardly export any grain, under the Bolsheviks. The Bolshevik exports are negligible; they are purely a means of propaganda. A sufficient proof of this is afforded by the following incident:

As the reader knows, I was the plenipotentiary for the South-east of Soviet Russia of the Mission headed by Professor Nansen, the supreme commissioner of the League of Nations, for combating the famine in Soviet Russia. Our Mission received colossal quantities of flour from abroad in order to feed the starving Russian masses. The flour arrived partly

via Riga and partly via Novorossisk (a port on the Black Sea). In 1923, when the famine in Russia was on the decrease, the Mission almost exclusively carried on the work of assisting children and students. About this time the Central Administration of the Mission had received information about a stock of 300,000 poods of wheat (about 5,000 tons) at Novorossisk, the property of the Soviet Government, and requested me to start negotiations with representatives of the Soviets, locally, with a view to purchasing this wheat for the needs of the Mission. Having ascertained that the stock was under the control of the Commissary for Supplies (since then this department has been abolished), Comrade Brajnikov (if I remember rightly), I sent to him my personal secretary with an offer for the stock in question.

My secretary returned with the information that although this wheat was really under the control of that official, he firmly refused to sell it to the Nansen Mission. Nettled by this and well knowing that the wheat was destined for sale, I went in person to ascertain the reason for such a refusal to sell it to us, never dreaming that they could refuse to sell it for the relief of the famishing. Comrade Brajnikov received me most politely, and the following conversation took place between us:

Myself: "Is it true, comrade, as my secretary informs me, that you have refused to sell to the Nansen Mission the 300,000 poods of grain which are under your control for export abroad? As far as I can judge such an operation should be profitable both for the Nansen Mission and also for your Government. The Mission is in a position to pay you the price which you would be paid in the foreign markets, and the freight would be your profit; furthermore we would have to grind this grain at your own flour mills, which will also yield you some profit, but above all do not forget that the Mission is buying this grain for the purpose of feeding the starving

population of your own country. Our profit will be in the saving of the cost of delivery to the Soviet frontier.[1]

Comrade Brajnikov: "I entirely agree with your arguments, Mr. Douillet, but unfortunately this grain is earmarked for quite a different purpose."

Suspecting that this purpose might be to obtain payment for the grain in a fixed foreign currency, of which the Soviets are always in the greatest need, I addressed the following offer to Comrade Brajnikov: "If it is your aim to receive in exchange for this grain some fixed foreign currency I would like you to know that the Mission can pay you in any foreign currency you like: in sterling, dollars . . ." The official's reply to this offer was: "Excuse me, Mr. Douillet, however much we need fixed foreign currency, that is not the reason why we are exporting this grain. Our only object is to create propaganda of our well-being by the appearance of Soviet grain on the foreign markets. For this reason I must warn you that even a direct application to the central organs of the authorities in Moscow will fail in bringing about the results you desire."

With this our conversation ended. Propaganda with the Bolsheviks comes before everything, even before the famine and the sufferings of the population.

This account of the conditions under which the peasants are living under the Bolshevik rule is, obviously, far from exhaustive, but it would not be complete without a description of how elections take place in the villages.

This is of particular importance in so far as it finally shatters all illusions as to the Soviet power being only the product of a national election.

There are no free elections in Soviet Russia: the only elections that exist are entirely regulated by force.

[1] In accordance with the agreement entered into with the Soviet Government the Nansen Mission enjoyed free transport over the Soviet territories.

I have witnessed many elections in Soviet villages, and I will endeavour to describe what I consider to be a typical case. During the first years of Soviet rule in particular the domination over the elections was of the roughest, most obvious and undisguised. The following scene of a mock-election took place at stanitza Novoloushkovska before my own eyes:

The square in front of the church was filled with people. In the centre of the square there was a tribunal of beams of wood nailed together; on it there were about five local Communists who were also the local authorities. Comrade Ubikon, the retiring president of the local executive committee, was delivering a harangue. Having shouted to his heart's content about all that the Communists had given to and done for the village and the golden era that was still to come, he invited those present to vote.

Comrade Ubikon: "We have before us three lists; one is a party list and the other two are non-party. The Communist list shall be voted for first.—Who is against? Hold up your hands!" At the same time Ubikon and the Communists surrounding him took out their revolvers from their holsters and stared "persuasively" at the crowd of peasants. "Who is against?—Nobody?—Then I declare the Communist list 'unanimously carried'. This being so, there is no need to take the vote on the other two lists."

Apart from the election taking place at the point of the revolver, those who dared to protest against the party list or who raised a hand for the other parties were summarily imprisoned or shot. A few years of similar elections soon taught the population how to "vote Soviet fashion" in order to remain alive. It is interesting to note that, when during recent times, the Soviet powers to some extent relaxed their repressions during elections and allowed individual peasants to elect persons from the non-party lists, the peasants could not believe that such a thing was

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The funeral of a tchekist, Nicolas Roudneff, killed by the Whites.

1. Roukhimovitch. 2. Lokatosch. 3. Voroschilov (People's Commissary for Naval and Military Affairs). 4. Minin. 5. Koumekov. X. "For You Alone—A Thousand of Them."

possible; the very idea was too foreign to the conceptions bred in them. Such an admission even managed to "slip through" in the Soviet Press. Thus I had occasion to read myself in the "Soviet South" dated 10-5-25 a notice about the elections, in which it was particularly pointed out how overjoyed the population had been (stanitza Staroleoushkovska) when they learned "that they had a right to elect whomsoever they liked." A more candid admission of the forcing of elections cannot be imagined.

In the Kouban region, after the publication of this news regarding the relative freedom of election, all the Communist presidents were thrown out. Then the Communist powers were worried; they declared these elections to have been irregular and caused fresh elections to take place, but in order to safeguard themselves against similar "surprises" a campaign was undertaken in the various districts whereby from 30 to 50 per cent. of the population lost their right to vote.

How limited is the freedom which the peasant enjoys at elections can be judged from the following extract from the speech delivered by Comrade Kalinin, the President of the Central Executive Committee of U.S.S.R., to the Third All-Union Congress of the Soviets: "Whatever the criticism with which the election lists of our party may meet, *it can only be directed against individuals: it cannot be directed against our programme and our aims*" ("Pravda" 19-5-25).

The peasant, crushed by unbearable taxation and deprived of all political rights, finds himself, since the advent of the Soviet *régime*, living under a veritable nightmare of terrible conditions. The peasantry in Russia is, to a man, opposed to the Soviet rule and the Communists.

It has come to this, that in every part of the country you will hear from all the peasants that "they are praying to God for the earliest possible downfall

of the Communists." They would prefer any rule to the Bolshevik rule. The peasant is a dangerous enemy of the Soviet power and the peasant risings never stop in Soviet Russia.

An interesting fact, and one that the foreign delegations visiting Russia probably have not noticed or understood, is that in the south, particularly in the Kouban region, in every stanitza, in every village, in front of the Soviet building in the square there is a high pole wrapped in straw, which is soaked in petroleum and resin. What is this pole standing there for?

It appears that from their experience of peasant risings the Bolsheviks have learned that the peasants always cut the telegraph and telephone wires at the outset and that consequently the Communists are unable to call for troops to quell the rising. This pole serves as a danger signal on such occasions. In the event of a rising the pole is set alight and the surrounding garrisons who see it immediately despatch troops.

The Soviet power in the villages rests exclusively on bayonets and terror. Truly the picture is a gruesome one.

# PART TWO

## THE MORAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SOVIET *RÉGIME*

# CHAPTER V

## THE STATE OF EDUCATION

IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS WE HAVE INVESTIGATED the material achievements of the Soviet *régime* in Russia, and it must be admitted that nowhere can the smallest hope be found that, even if Communism has not as yet increased the prosperity of the country, at least in the future there may be some improvement in the situation.

On the contrary, after reviewing the facts, we have ascertained that the fall in the material wealth of the country and population under the Communist *régime* has every chance of continuing and of bringing the country to a complete collapse and the uttermost limits of impoverishment.

The Bolsheviks had ample time during the ten years of their rule to create something. But during this time they have, instead, only succeeded in proving to the whole world that they are utterly incapable of creating: that Bolshevism, from its very nature, is only capable of destroying.

But perhaps Communism has attained some positive results in the domain of morals? What has it done for education or for the mental and physical health (the one inseparable from the other) of the people?

During the many years I have spent within the Soviet Union I have been particularly interested in these questions: I have studied them on the spot and endeavoured to find here at least some justification for Bolshevism, some real achievement of the Soviets. But in the sphere of moral achievements

I have met with facts which, more than any others, condemn the Soviet mode of rule and the Communistic ideology.

Here Bolshevism has revealed itself in a particularly characteristic manner and has proved itself to be essentially a *decomposing* force. The pictures of Soviet moral achievements are not only uninspiring but, without exaggeration, disgusting and repulsive.

Communism in Russia has produced such an increase of immorality, anarchy, and hooliganism as has probably never been experienced during the most depraved periods of the history of mankind.

The Communists are, quite consciously, endeavouring to break and destroy the fundamental and elementary laws of morality and to undermine such of its supports as the family, marriage, respect for old age, and religion. They preach and try to inculcate the very reverse ideals.

The sad and terrible results of this propaganda are evidenced by the cultural and moral decay of the country, examples and facts of which I myself have witnessed and ascertained.

Let us first examine the state of public education in Soviet Russia. The Bolsheviks were the first to accuse the *régimes* which preceded them of not paying sufficient attention to the education of the people: in fact they went so far as to maintain that they were afraid to instruct the masses.

But what have the Bolsheviks themselves done in the matter? How much more have they done for it than the preceding governments? More? The question of doing more does not arise, for under the Bolsheviks the number of schools, instead of increasing, has decreased rapidly, particularly in the villages. I have myself seen the schools in the villages being closed one by one.

I will take examples from a locality which I know particularly well: Stanitza Novoloushkovska (Kou-

ban district). Before the Bolsheviks there were two secondary schools run by the government (one for boys and one for girls) and six government primary schools, to say nothing of two private schools. Now, under Soviet rule, there remain only one secondary school, mixed (as are all schools in U.S.S.R.), and one primary school: all the others have been closed. Stanitza Kamenska (Don district) formerly possessed two modern schools, one secondary and one technical, to say nothing of the elementary schools. Now there only remains one secondary school. Sloboda Belovodsk (Kharkov Govt.) had one secondary school for boys, which is now closed. Khootor, near the Station Tikhoretzka, which was formerly a model commercial school, has been converted by the Bolsheviks into a theatre-club; the girls' secondary school and the Railway school (Wladicaucas Rly.) have been closed, and so on.

Were I not afraid of tiring the reader, I could name hundreds of schools that have been closed, only mentioning those which I myself knew.

Another point to be considered is the fees paid for schooling. Formerly, before the Soviet *régime*, tuition in the elementary schools was free: in the secondary schools the minimum of fees was charged. The Bolsheviks promised, among many other things, free education for all. But these were nothing but empty words; in reality, even in such schools as were formerly free, fees are now exacted.

Their excuse is that the fees are not charged for tuition but for the repair and upkeep of the buildings, for cleaning, and heating during the winter, etc. Formerly books, pencils, pens, nibs, copy-books, and all such articles were supplied free to the elementary school pupils; now everywhere and always the pupils are obliged to buy them. If occasionally such things *are* supplied free in isolated cases, then the quantities supplied are ridiculous. For instance, in the village Sagoony (Voronesh Govt.) the pupils received in the

course of two years *one* copy-book and *one* pencil between every two of them.

Tuition is gratuitous—but even so one has to pay for it!

But this refers to schools which were formerly quite free: in what are now called the schools of the 2nd degree (the former secondary and modern schools) one has to pay twice—in the first place for tuition and in the second place for the upkeep of the buildings, as already explained.

But even the fees for tuition have increased under the Bolsheviks. Thus, for instance, in the Rostov secondary school the annual fee was 50 roubles (£5). In 1926, one of my acquaintances employed in a Soviet institution, who has three children, had to pay 12 roubles per month for each of them, which in the course of the school year amounts to 108 roubles.

Formerly the fee for tuition was 50 roubles "inclusive"; now it is 108 roubles plus the charges for such extras as upkeep of the building, heating, etc. If in the second degree schools some children are excused the fee for tuition on account of their parents being out of work or being in receipt of too small a salary, nobody is ever excused the fees for maintenance of buildings, heating, etc., and even the poorest of parents are forced to pay these. In the event of the parents being quite unable to meet this extraordinary expense the children are expelled from school.

A case in point was that of the son of a greaser on the North Causasian Railway, Jacob G——, who was expelled for this reason, since his father was only earning 19 roubles per month (about 38/-). Formerly there were no such extras to pay and in many cases parents even received grants and assistance.

The difference, it will be observed, is not at all in favour of the Communists. But this is not all.

In former times the children in the Russian schools, as everywhere else, were instructed in various

subjects. In the Soviet schools learning is by no means of primary importance. The principal object of schooling under the Communists has become the inculcation of the political ideas of Communism.

The schools in Soviet Russia are, first and foremost, institutions for the propaganda of Communism among the rising generation. Politics have ousted learning in its very sanctuary—the schools. The political charter of Communism (in Russia, for short, "Politgramota") is by far the most important subject taught in the Soviet schools. If the pupil is well up in "Politgramota" but weak in other subjects, it does not matter: he is moved up. On the other hand, if he is very good at other subjects but weak in "Politgramota," he is left in his class for another year and sometimes even expelled. I will give a few examples in illustration of this fact:

In Rostov-on-Don, in the second degree school, situated in the former girls' secondary school, Ekaterinsky, in 1925 at the annual examinations, 19 pupils of both sexes were left in their "group" (class) for a second year merely because they failed to answer this question correctly: What resolutions were passed by the fourteenth and the fifteenth Soviet annual congresses? It must be mentioned that, at that time, the fifteenth had not yet taken place: the fourteenth had been the last held.

This question was put to children from *12 to 15 years old*. I knew one of these children very well—Paul A——, aged 13. Paul was asked in the "Politgramota" examination only the second part of the question: "What resolutions did the fifteenth congress pass?" It slipped his memory that the fourteenth had been the last, and, instead of answering that the fourteenth congress had been the last and that the fifteenth was to be held on such and such a date at such and such a place, he recited the whole proceedings of the fourteenth, which he had memorised to the letter. For this the poor boy was set back one year.

Imagine the minister of education in France, Mr. Herriot, issuing an order that pupils are to be left in their classes for a second year if they are unable to answer the question, "What resolutions were passed by such and such a congress of the Radical-Socialist party, and what by another?"—and that in respect of children aged from 12 to 15 years! To our minds such a thing would seem monstrous, but in Soviet Russia it is a reality, an everyday occurrence, and not even one of the worst: there are plenty of worse ones.

Not only children, but adults also are penalised for similar reasons. Here is an instance of what happened to a medical student of the Don University, Nicholas Sh——, a student I knew well, and who often visited my house. Nicholas Sh—— was put back in his fourth year for failing to answer the following question in the "Politgramota" examination, a question which to every normal person outside the limits of Soviet Russia (there people are used to such things) would appear to be nothing but a coarse joke, and certainly not an examination question asked of a medical student in his fourth year: "What sort of beard had Carl Marx and what hair had Ivan Illitch Lenin?" Nicholas Sh—— did not reply to this question and was put back for it: as he found out afterwards, he was expected to have answered: "Lenin had hardly any hair and Marx had a profusion of hair and beard." This question is characteristic of the Soviet method of teaching.

And here I may quote an admonition delivered to Antonina I—— at the final examination at the Medical Faculty at the same University.

"The Soviet Republic confers upon you the diploma of Doctor of Medicine, but always bear in mind that you must not only treat your patients but you must also find out their political opinions. A sick person often confides in the doctor and the latter must always be, like O.G.P.U. (Tcheka), the first to defend the revolution. Remember that you

will be held responsible if you find any anti-revolutionary opinions among your patients and do not inform O.G.P.U."

Among other things I was the plenipotentiary of the European Student Relief: consequently I was surrounded by Russian students and made many friends amongst these young people to whom my institution afforded relief.

I have cited the case of Antonina I—— as a characteristic example, but I heard of similar admonitions from practically every medical student who was leaving the university during my residence in Russia.

Such a specimen of Soviet medical etiquette strikes one as so low and so repulsive that it is difficult to recollect it without a feeling of nausea and indignation at the indescribable violation by the Communists of even a man's conscience.

Having examined the failures in the university and in the different classes of the schools due to bad answers on the subject of "Politgramota," let us now examine the reverse instance of a student who knew practically nothing but nevertheless passed from class to class and received good testimonials for the sole reason that he was politically dependable from a Communist point of view.

A certain Edward Shourpe was studying at the medical faculty of the same university. This student, although he hardly ever attended the university and had hardly any scientific knowledge, regularly passed from standard to standard and eventually completed the course and received the diploma of Doctor of Medicine. Why? For the simple reason that this "student," if he may be called one, was a member of the "Troyka" attached to the university!

A "Troyka" exists at every university: it is a Communist group which not only manages the affairs of the university but also arranges the lectures. The "Troyka" examines beforehand all lectures, and the Professors are forbidden to deliver such as fail to

pass its censorship and receive its sanction. This same "Troyka" assists at all examinations and has a right to ask examination questions, and upon them depends the valuation of the student; *the opinion of the Professors in this respect is only of secondary importance.*

How could Shourpe study when every day he had to attend five or six meetings in the Communistic "cell" of the university, in the Rostov "ispolkom," or in the "Troyka"! He himself admitted to me his utter ignorance, and I was told the same thing by his Professors.

But Shourpe was a "Tchekist" before everything: he was also a member of the "Troyka," a member of the town Soviets of Rostov and Nakhitchevan-on-Don. Not to pass him at the examinations would be for the Professor tantamount to signing his own death warrant. So, of course, Shourpe was always brilliant at examinations! Now he is a Doctor of Medicine, and a professor at the university. He is still a member of the "Troyka," and almost President of the university.

In order to complete Shourpe's "record" it may be as well to add that, thanks to him and his colleagues Henkin and Dorsht (members of the "Troyka" of the Don university appointed by O.G.P.U.), dozens of students are at this very moment serving terms of exile in Siberia.

Thus it is easy to imagine what the teaching is like in the Soviet universities and what is the value of their diplomas. I, who fed and assisted thousands of students in Soviet Russia in the name of the Nansen Mission, the Catholic Mission, and the European Student Relief, have held in my hands thousands of petitions from students for help or for their admission to the free dining-rooms for students which were maintained in connection with those missions. Seventy-five per cent. of these, if not more, were written so ungrammatically and with such

mistakes in spelling, that it was difficult to believe that they had been penned by students.

At one time in Russia, a pupil of the preparatory class in a secondary school would have received the lowest possible marks for such an effort. Now, thanks to the Soviet Power, even students, future lawyers, historians, and doctors are unable to write the simplest letter correctly.

One cannot deny the fact that under the Soviets education has made enormous strides—but unfortunately backwards, not forwards.

It has already been pointed out that the schools are being used by the Soviet powers almost exclusively for Communist propaganda. In these schools all subjects are barred which might possibly cause the pupil the slightest doubt of the infallibility of the ideas of Marx and materialism.

The Soviet school hides from the pupil's eyes everything that lies outside Communism. In order more easily to carry through such a party-biassed education in the highest institutions, the Communists are trying to attract the most ignorant people who have not sufficient previous education to enable them to exercise any critical faculties whatever.

In proof of this, there exists in Soviet Russia a so-called "Communistic university dedicated to Comrade Sverdlov". This university trains future people's commissaries, Red diplomats, etc., in fact future rulers who will take the place of the now-ruling Soviet "clique". Naturally, only a Communist may be a student in the Sverdlov university; but in order that he may be turned into a fanatic, believing only in such ideas as have been drilled into him, the following admission rules have been elaborated:

The committees of the party in different districts send specially selected members to the university, according to an elaborate ratio. Preference is given to minority nationals and to the least-cultured minorities of Russia at that (Tchouvashs, Tcheremiss.

etc.). The extent of knowledge of the candidate for admission to this university is guaged in a rather strange manner: *instead of a minimum, a maximum of knowledge is* required.

Anyone who knows more is considered dangerous and cannot be admitted. In the instructions laid down for selection it is stated that the candidate must possess no qualifications beyond a knowledge of the four rules of arithmetic, ability to write, and a smattering of geography. In short, what is wanted is a brain as free from knowledge as possible: this will be the most fruitful soil for implanting "Marxism" and "Leninism". The candidate must know nothing, so as to acquire all knowledge at the Communist university, which supplies it only in a special light. Only under such conditions do the Communists hope to make of him "their very own" worker.

How weak must be the fundamental bases of Communism when the Communists themselves are so afraid of their student being infected with any but Communist views!

The following episode, witnessed by me in a Soviet School, is typical of Soviet aims and methods of teaching:

Under my direction and control, as representative of the Nansen Mission, there worked in the South-east of Soviet Russia a Jewish relief mission, *Verelief*, sent out by the Jewish conference in Paris. At the request of the workmen of the North Caucasian Railway, *Verelief* undertook the maintenance of the children's home and the school for the children of workmen on the railway. This school was situated at Teekhoretzka Station, 171 kilometres from Rostov-on-Don.

Before taking over the school, the representative of *Verelief* and I proceeded by a special train, placed at our disposal by the Railway management, to the station Teekhoretzka, for the purpose of inspecting

it. The train reached Teekhoretzka at dawn and the inspection was fixed for noon.

Knowing Teekhoretzka very well, I took advantage of this opportunity and, after enquiring as to where the school was, proceeded to have a look at it before the official inspection. At 9.30 a.m. I entered the school unexpected and proceeded straight to the classrooms where work had just begun.

This is what I saw: At the teacher's table stood a boy of about eight or nine years old; on either side of him stood two individuals, as I learned later the teacher and the secretary of the Communist "cell" of the school. This is the lesson I witnessed: "Tell me, Johnnie, do you pray to God?" The child: "Yes, I do, comrade." The teacher: "And what does your God give you? Does he give you what you ask him for?" The child was silent. The teacher: "Then pray now; ask God to give you bread. You are hungry, are you not?" The child: "I am hungry, comrade, very hungry!" The teacher: "Then pray; perhaps your Jesus Christ will give you something." The boy hesitated but knelt down and crossed himself and started praying earnestly, with many low bows right to the ground, probably as he had seen his parents do. It was most moving to see the pure and beautiful faith of the child. But the black ravens stood over him and after a minute or two interrupted him by asking: "Now then, Johnnie, has that God of yours given you any bread?" The child with tears in his eyes, not understanding what was required of him, but seeming with the sensitiveness of a child's soul to have some presentiment of what was to follow, answered: "No, comrade, dear God does not give me any!" The teacher: "Now you see what that God of yours is like. Now instead of asking your God, who does not exist, you had better ask the comrade here" (pointing to the secretary of the Communist "cell"). "Say to him, 'please, comrade, give me some bread.' You will see that the comrade

will give you some!" The hungry child obediently repeated after the teacher: "Comrade, please give me some bread!" The Communist: "Now then, why didn't you do that at first? You should have asked me; I would have given you some at once. But you go and ask God! Have you ever seen Him? He does not exist. Do you understand that?" and, taking a roll out of the pocket of his leather jerkin, he gave it to the crying child. . . .

I had no further moral strength left to watch this scene any longer and remain a dumb, helpless spectator. Realising the futility of trying to help the child or of tearing him away from these vandals, with tears in my eyes I left the school there and then, not waiting for the official inspection, and returned straight away to Rostov. *Poor, unfortunate Russian children who are doomed to remain in such hands, in the full, unchallenged control of similar Communistic "preceptors"!*

Consider, my reader, you who perhaps have children of your own whom you love, what can happen to our children also if Communism is allowed to triumph over us in the West.

Parents, you must be the first, for the good of your children, to raise your voices to prevent our Ministers and our diplomats from acknowledging this government of evil.

But to return to our consideration of the state of education in Soviet Russia—

In a Soviet school of the second degree, the former modern school in Rostov-on-Don, the pupils aged from 14 to 17 were set a questionaire "*on the sex question*"! In other schools of Rostov and throughout U.S.S.R. similar questionaires were set, but I take the case of a document given me by the parents of the children concerned, and which I have actually held in my own hands and perused.

Among the questions which these children aged from 14 to 17 had to answer were the following,

which imprinted themselves on my mind: "When did you commit your first sexual act?" "With whom"? "What were your sensations?" "Were there any consequences?" "What were they?" "How often do you now have sexual connection?" and there were further more disgusting, more revolting, and more monstrous questions. The Soviet school is in truth a school of depravity!

In the same city of Rostov, in the school of the second degree (formerly the school of Stepanov), the children aged from 10 to 13 were given for reading aloud in the school-room (and it must not be forgotten that all Soviet schools are co-educational) Boris Pilniak's "The Naked Year". The book is full of obscene incidents and expressions, coarse, and detailed descriptions of sexual acts, with such commentaries upon them as would make a normally-minded adult feel sick; and yet it is read and digested by boys and girls of 10 to 13 years of age! One cannot find expressions strong enough to describe such Soviet upbringing.

The Communists have established periodical political cleansings (as they are called) of young scholars in Russia. Those found to be politically unsound are expelled from the universities and even imprisoned or exiled to the Solovetzky Island or Siberia. In the Soviet prisons I have met a large number of students from different universities of U.S.S.R. serving such sentences.

During my confinement in the Boutirky prison in Moscow a group of about a hundred condemned students came through, who, after having served their sentence on the Solovetzky Island, were deported for settlement in the Narym and Tooroukhtan districts (Siberia). After having been expelled from the highest educational institutions of Moscow and after having been refused admission to any provincial universities (in the provinces they have their own "cleansings" and their own victims), these students

were bold enough to meet on the premises of the famous Trediakov Picture Gallery in Moscow and to elect delegates which were to petition the people's commissary of foreign affairs and the people's commissary for education, Comrade Lunatcharsky, to grant them leave to proceed to Tzechoslovakia for the purpose of completing their studies. This was deemed counter-revolution and punishment was meted out to them as already stated. So do G.P.U. punish the desire to learn.

There is no lack of evidence of the close relation between the G.P.U. and the schools in Soviet Russia.

In Soviet Russia children from the age of seven years upwards are questioned at school (I personally know of hundreds of cases in Rostov, in Moscow and in many villages) as to what their parents are doing at home, whether they believe in God, whether friends visit them, what such friends talk about with their parents: and innumerable similar questions are asked.

I could name the schools in which I have known this to have happened, but even the list of the schools known to me personally would be far too long, and, besides, such cross-examinations are carried out in all Soviet schools, throughout Russia. From the children who are learning at the schools information is gathered as to the political soundness of their parents.

It is difficult to decide where the Soviet school ends and where the O.G.P.U. begins.

# CHAPTER VI

## ABANDONED CHILDREN—CHILDREN'S HOMES—CARE OF OLD AGE

HOWEVER DEMORALIZING THE SOVIET SYSTEM OF education may be, at least a child learning at one of these Soviet schools has a family and relatives who can fight against and counteract its influence at home.

The parents, as far as they are able, sustain the morals of the child, and the beneficial influence of the family still acts as a kind of counterpoise to Soviet education and upbringing. But in Soviet Russia there is an enormous number of abandoned children —more than anywhere else in the civilised world— children who have no relatives and who are left to shift for themselves.

How has it happened that Soviet Russia is peopled with untold swarms of homeless, abandoned children? Who is responsible for this phenomenon, hitherto unknown in the history of humanity? *Bolshevism!*

Bolshevism, as has already been pointed out, in trying to establish a *Commune* in Russia, reduced the country to an appalling state of famine, such as had never before been experienced. The populations of whole villages died of starvation, some in their homes, others on the road; everybody still able to move hurried away in search of bread, in search of districts which had garnered some kind of a harvest. Millions of people, blocked all the roads in dense crowds marching somewhere—to the south, after bread—after salvation. Millions of people perished by the roadside. The parents, denying themselves everything for the sake of the children, perished

first. Here and there, some of the children survived; but, having survived death from starvation, they found themselves utterly alone in the world, unwanted orphans, without a roof over their heads and without protection.

These crowds, as time went on, were joined and swollen by children with inborn evil instincts, who had left their families, victims of the demoralising Bolshevik propaganda.

Bolshevism, which preaches disobedience and insubordination to parents, is doing its best to destroy the family. Recognising in it an element which counteracts its influence, it tries to tear away the children and to set them against their parents. That is why there are now five million destitute children in Russia. Something, indeed, for the Soviet power to boast of!

These children live under the open skies in the steppe; sometimes they contrive a primitive dwelling: they "doss" in the ruins of burned-down buildings, which under Soviet rule are not rebuilt: they spend the night in the dust-bins which stand near the market places.

In Rostov-on-Don I have come across 8 or 10 of such homeless children who have packed themselves into one of these dust-bins in Moscow Street near the Old Market place. These bins measure about two metres in length and 1½ metres in width and height. The children take turns in sleeping down below or on the top. Early in the morning, if you happen to be walking in the central streets where the roadways are being repaired, you will see small children, covered in soot and black as niggers, creeping out of the stoke-holes of the boilers used for the melting of asphalt.

In the railway stations in the empty trucks and underneath them, in the porches of the houses, in caves scraped out of the sides of the river bank—everywhere, even in places where it would never

Destitute Children.

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enter your head that human beings could find refuge, you will see bedraggled, half-clad, and in most cases quite naked abandoned children.

They live by begging, by stealth, and even by prostitution! Here are a few cases, typical examples, chosen at random, which will help the reader to form an opinion as to how these outcasts obtain their scanty daily bread:

Near the railway station in Rostov-on-Don there is a little square; in this square at night you may witness terrible, disgusting sights—dozens of small girls, from 12 to 15, swarming round the passers-by, offering their little unformed bodies—willing for a few coppers or a piece of bread to submit to any depravity of sexual intercourse. Near by is the sentry box of the militiaman on duty. If you imagine that this guardian of Soviet order takes any steps to prevent such occurrences you are greatly mistaken. On the contrary, there exists a special scale of charges in accordance with which these child prostitutes must divide their earnings with the representative of the law. Twenty kopeks for the use of the floor of his sentry-box and his armed protection—such is his levy. In a queue near the box others stand in pairs, an adult and a wretched girl, awaiting their turn.

It is terrible. But it is not only near the station that the horrors take place—the abuse and desecration of children's bodies—but everywhere, in the most central streets. The powers that be pretend not to notice it: such occurrences appear quite natural to them. Similar things happen all over the Soviet union. The girl-prostitutes are to be numbered not in thousands or hundreds of thousands, but probably in millions!

Again, thousands of children are searching among the newly-dumped refuse on urban garbage-heaps for a crust of bread, a bone, or anything: any find, smothered in dirt and filth, is fought for, divided,

and eaten on the spot. One can scarcely believe that these children are human beings: they are more like hungry dogs scratching and fighting for an unearthed bone. It is difficult to realise that all this is taking place in Russia, even in Soviet Russia.

In Rostov-on-Don, under the Bolsheviks, the E.P.O. (the United Consumers' Society) established a restaurant in the garden of the former trade-assistants' club, in what was once Sadovaia Street. As you sit at dinner there hundreds of eyes are watching you. The abandoned children are waiting for you to finish your dinner and leave the table, when they will pounce upon it and grab your leavings. They hope that perhaps your attention may be diverted. You may turn round for a moment, and the dish that stood before you has vanished: all you will see is a fleeing crowd of children fighting over the spoil. On all sides you hear: "Uncle, give me something, give me . . . me!"

The visitors calmly listen to these appeals: they do not notice the hungry children: they are accustomed to them, and their sufferings no longer move them. The human heart has become coarse and hardened under the Soviets. Each excuses himself in a selfish manner: "One cannot feed them all. I may give them food to-day and to-morrow not have any myself." It is a terrible picture for one who is not accustomed to it.

During the All-Union Automobile Race of 1925, when the foreign competitors were passing through Rostov and were to break their journey there, the Rostov Executive Council reserved this restaurant for their exclusive use. For the preceding two days the population was shut out from the restaurant "so that they should not have any communication with the foreigners". The Bolsheviks, with their customary cynical calm, put up notices at the doors forbidding private citizens to enter. It was fortunate that the foreigners were unable to read Russian.

But so that the foreign visitors should not see the terrible plight of the children I have just described, for two days there was posted round the gardens a chain of militiamen, whose duty it was to drive away the abandoned children who were trying to get in. The foreigners could not possibly be allowed to see these living witnesses against the Communist *régime*, its most innocent victims.

If any of those foreign competitors should chance to read these pages, let them search their memories and recall their reception in Rostov and the dinners in the restaurant of E.P.O. They will recollect the large number of guards during the Rostov dinners, for it must have struck them at the time as rather strange. They were being guarded against hungry children.

For the purpose of committing their thefts the destitute children form bands, and roam about the city, selecting their victims. In the central streets they snatch handbags and parcels from women, and they are particularly active round the markets.

On one occasion, about one o'clock in the afternoon, I myself saw a band of about 30 to 35 children attack a baker's shop in the old market at Rostov-on-Don. They were obviously led by two of the older ones, about 17 years old. In the twinkling of an eye the proprietor was knocked off his feet, the bread was snatched up, and the band quietly dispersed: and, characteristically, a militiaman, who was standing close by, never moved. He only burst out laughing: it amused him to see a raid in the centre of the city in broad daylight.

Five minutes later I witnessed a similar incident near by. An old fishwife was bowled over by the children, and her two baskets of fish vanished as if by magic. Again there was a militiaman standing by, who calmly looked on with complete indifference, as though it were no concern of his at all.

For a long time I failed to understand this attitude

of the "authorities" and their representatives, but an accident opened my eyes.

A few months later I happened to be in the market place again and by chance I found myself in the crowd near three peasants who were conversing almost in a whisper. I accidentally overheard fragments of their conversation. They were slating the Soviet powers, "communia" as they called them, for all they were worth. Suddenly I noticed an abandoned child, aged about 13, carefully listening to their conversation and at the same time trying to avoid being noticed. Seeing that the boy did not wish his presence to be noticed, and thinking, therefore, that he was trying to rob them, I was on the point of warning the peasants to beware of the little thief, when he suddenly left them, ran up to some "civilian", pulled him by the sleeve, and said: "Comrade, come here." He then conducted the civilian to the peasants, pointed to them, and declared: "These men are abusing the Soviet powers!" The civilian, who happened to be an agent of the G.P.U. "in mufti", arrested the peasants and, followed by the boy, led them away. It appears that the G.P.U. uses the abandoned children as spies. They are allowed to rob without any fear of punishment on condition that they only rob private traders. Besides this they are also rewarded with money. One night when passing the house (since destroyed but formerly the property of Tchirikov) No. 44 on the Taganrog Prospect, which is a favourite night lodging of the abandoned children, I overheard the following dispute, which I repeat, as far as possible, word for word: "You filthy little slut!" (evidently a boy was rating a girl inside). "You'd try and palm me off with a rouble and a half for that woman you got arrested to-day, when you were given five roubles, would you! Give me half, or I'll do you in. . . ."

These abandoned children have reached the uttermost limits of depravity. Sexual life begins at the

Abandoned children in Moscow.

most tender age: we have seen this in the case of the girl-prostitutes. The boys are no better. At the age of 13 or 14 the children sometimes pair off; more often, as there are usually fewer abandoned girls, they segregate in groups of several boys and one girl. The boys procure the necessities of life, and the girl "keeps house" and is the "shared female": sometimes, when the boys are unable to procure anything, as a last resort she is made to earn money on "night duty".

Such a mode of life has brought about the natural and unavoidable result, almost a hundred per cent infection of the abandoned children with venereal diseases. That is the verdict of the medical inspection undertaken by the foreign missions under my charge in the S.-E. district of U.S.S.R.

I have no wish to describe minutely certain aspects of the life of these abandoned children, and I shall abstain from doing so since the naked facts with which I have already acquainted the reader will be sufficient for him to form a definite opinion on the "beauties of the Communists' earthly paradise" in so far as the children are concerned.

Soviet Russia does, of course, boast orphanages, now called children's homes, although their number is quite negligible. The Communist Bogouslavsky, in his report to the All-Russian conference, supplies official data as regards the number of pensioners in the children's homes of U.S.S.R.

Of the several millions of abandoned children 206,000 were inmates of these houses in 1926. This is, of course, a negligible percentage. I have already pointed out the reason for such neglect. Now let us look inside these children's homes and consider the conditions under which the children live in the Soviet orphanages.

It is noteworthy that the Soviets take particular care to impress foreign visitors with their supposed "special" efforts for the care of the children. For

this purpose one of the first institutions shown to the foreign trade delegations and to individual foreigners is a "show" children's home. Soviet Russia possesses several such, equipped on the latest scientific lines, which fulfil the most rigid requirements. Foreign visitors are naturally delighted with these institutions, and they are easily led to believe that the Soviet takes great care for the rising generation. By way of contrast to their descriptions I shall give a sketch of a "medium Children's home", the result of investigations undertaken by me as representative of foreign relief Missions, accompanied by the highly respected Professor Armandi, the famous Italian scientist, who was sent out by the Italian Red Cross (Croce Rossa Italiana).

About 50 kilometres from Rostov, in the city of Novotcherkassk, there are several children's homes as well as the Don central distributing-house. These homes were grouped in Novotcherkassk for the reason that this city did not suffer from the house shortage, so prevalent in all the other cities of the Don region, and, indeed, throughout U.S.S.R. It was to inspect these houses in Novotcherkassk that Professor Armandi and I set out.

As soon as we arrived in the city we repaired to the local Ispolkom (the executive committee of the city's Soviet) to advise them of our intention to visit the children's houses, as without a written authority from the Ispolkom we would not have been admitted.

We were received by Comrade Pivivorov, the president of the Ispolkom, tall, coarse and clumsy, once a dock hand, then a sailor and head of the Zaritzin rising in 1917. Our request for means of transport, according to the agreement with the Mission concluded between comrades Tchetcherin and Litvinov on the one hand and Professor Nansen on the other was refused by Comrade Pivovorov, who wished to prevent our inspection. Only when

I threatened to cable immediately to the Centre and face the Soviet Government with the accusation of not having carried out their agreement, placing all responsibility on him, did Comrade Pivovarov realise what he was risking and give us a car and a pass.

In the first home we visited the first person we met was the gate-keeper and we enquired of him where we could find the person in charge of the home. His reply was scarcely very helpful: "Who knows where he is?—He may be here or he may be in the town. But go in: possibly you will find him there somewhere."

We followed his advice, and went in, and found ourselves in a large, disgustingly dirty, half-dark room filled with tables—obviously the dining-room. We were met by a wave of horrible odours that made us feel quite sick. We could scarcely breathe, but with our handkerchiefs to our noses we bore this as best we could. Professor Armandi drew me to the door saying, "Let's get out of here. I can't stand this any longer". But at that moment I suddenly noticed something moving under the table nearest us. The Professor and I bent down to see what it was, and in the half-darkness we saw a boy and a girl under the table committing the sexual act and near by a youngster watching them with wide open eyes and playing with himself. Then we noticed that the same sort of thing was going on under the other tables: dozens of children from 10 to 14 years old had made of this dining-room a disorderly house!

The Professor and I left the room and ran through the building from room to room in search of the superintendent or in the hope of finding at least someone of the staff. Nowhere was there anyone to be found but the children. In one room they were fighting, in another playing: in others again we came across sights similar to that we had

witnessed in the first room. Finally we reached the kitchen, where at last we found the superintendent of the home. Our tale left him absolutely cold; instead of going to the spot where we had just witnessed these horrible scenes and taking some steps to put a stop to them, he met us with the calm statement: "But what can I do with them? If I drive them away they will go elsewhere."

We left this children's home horrified. We went to other homes to inspect them. In all the Professor and I visited five of them, and we were thoroughly disgusted with what we saw there. Each successive house we visited offered a worse picture to our astonished eyes, and the first house seemed to be the most orderly after all. It is impossible to describe in decent language what we saw. It will be sufficient to add that at the time of our visit to the Novotcherkassk Clinic there were ten children from these homes in expectation of childbirth! Among them there was *a girl of 13 with child!*

In order to give the reader some idea of what the children are like who have been through these Soviet homes I shall describe something that I myself witnessed at the Persianovska Children's Colony, near Novotcherkassk.

It happened about a couple of months after Professor Armandi and I had inspected the children's homes in Novotcherkassk. I went to Persianovska to acquaint myself with the state of the children in the colonies there, but when I arrived I found it impossible for me to carry out the intended inspection. An armed rising had taken place in the colony.

It appears that a few days before 25 children from the Novotcherkassk distributing house had arrived in the Persianovska colony. As it happened, these children were an organised gang of bandits. Arms appeared from somewhere, rifles, revolvers, and guns, to say nothing of knives and "cutdowns" (shortened

rifles). The children effected a rising, arrested the administration, and collected all goods and chattels and carted them to the market place *where they sold them*.

When I arrived all power had already been in the hands of the revolted children for five days. Strange as it may seem, the Novotcherkassk Executive Com mittee sent a delegation to persuade them to make peace. But persuasion was quite ineffective: the children would not surrender. Only on the sixth day a detachment of troops surrounded the house and disarmed them. The reader may draw his own conclusions as to the value of a Soviet upbringing.

It must be noted that in Soviet Russia only an insignificant percentage of the destitute children find refuge in the children's orphanages. The Soviet powers plead poverty, and sadly state that the budget does not allow them to create a more efficient network of orphanages, that the authorities are doing everything that is possible according to their means to provide food and shelter for the children. This is nothing but a barefaced lie. The Soviets do not concern themselves with the fate of the millions of unfortunate children. All their money is employed in the propaganda of world revolution, and in subsidising the activities of the Third Communist International. Not only have they no intention whatever of helping the destitute children of their country, but, on the contrary, they even seize their last morsel of bread.

At times they do not hesitate even to *rob* these unfortunates of whatever they can.

In Rostov-on-Don, when the Mission of the Holy See was liquidated, several truck-loads of produce—cocoa, flour, sugar, condensed milk, medicines, etc., were left as a last present to the orphaned children. All these supplies were handed over to the superintendent of the children's homes, the Communist woman Jyla, who at the same time was the deputy

for the president of the North Caucasian branch of the "Children's Friend" society. The Mission also handed over a motor-car and part of its office furniture.

Less than a fortnight after the Mission had gone I saw the supplies it had left for the children in the windows of the Red army Co-operative of the North Caucasian Military District (S.K.V.O.), the "Zvezda," in Friedrich Engels Street.

The supplies were not handed over to the children; they were stolen from them and handed over to the Red army to be sold for the benefit of the Red army in the military Co-operatives. The car naturally never got to the children either; it was "adopted" by the administrative department of the Don Executive Committee of the Soviets! The furniture went straight to Comrade Jyla, who considered it quite useless to give to the children, and kept it for herself.

As for the children, their lives are not of such importance to the Soviets as the upkeep of their executive committees, their Communist workers, and the Red army. By means of the Soviet "Children's Friend" society the Soviet power robs the very children it professes, ironically enough, to protect.

This chapter would not be complete without some account of what the Soviets have done for old age. Those who have not been infected with Communist ideas consider it a duty to respect and care for the aged and to render the last days of those who have served their country free from want and privation.

The Bolsheviks, however, think differently; in their opinion these are "Bourgeois" prejudices. They affirm that there is no room for old people in this world, because they are non-productive: they eat, but do not work.

These ideas have been put into practice in Russia in the most terrible manner. When the Bolsheviks came into power they began by killing off the old people whom they found in the houses and alms-

houses with premeditated cruelty. This crime was committed in every city, and the reader may judge of the circumstances from the following typical example which took place before my own eyes:

A short time after Rostov had been occupied by the Soviet troops, the Bolsheviks turned their attention to the Rostov almshouses. Several hundred old people who were being cared for there were led out into the grounds and shot within the precincts of the garden. For some reason not all the inmates were shot, but only those of two blocks. Then the Bolsheviks left and for a few months seemed to forget that the almshouses existed.

In the two blocks, which had become vacant in this way, they lodged workmen-students and pupils of the "Sovpart" school.[1] But the Communist students mutinied; two blocks were not enough for them, and they demanded to be relieved of their helpless old neighbours.

This time, however, the authorities behaved more "humanely": they did not kill the old people at once, but removed them to one of the abandoned and dilapidated houses at Novotcherkassk, and left them there to die of starvation. Some of them were saved by benefactors who took pity on them, but the majority died of starvation.

Their former home is now the hostel of the students of the "Sovpart" school and also, by a supreme irony of fate, the "Institute for the preservation of trees and other plantations".

Institutions for the relief of old age do not exist in U.S.S.R. It is true that the Communists have several "show" homes for the aged, but not only are these homes merely "show" places: they are also created solely for Communists, as their very name proclaims, "houses for the veterans of labour and *revolution*".

[1] The Soviet party exists for the instruction of new members of the Communist party and those "politically uneducated."

It only remains for me to remark that *in the twentieth century* there exists in Europe a Government which persecutes its aged countrymen. In the West this fact is too often forgotten, and there are still people who *will shake hands with the representatives of such a government*.

# CHAPTER VII

## THE DECLINE OF MORALITY, LICENSE, VICE, HOOLIGANISM, AND THE STATE OF SANITATION IN U.S.S.R.

DURING THE YEARS OF COMMUNIST RULE A GENERATION has grown up subjected to the disintegrating moral influence of Communist ideology. Children who have passed through such "educational" institutions as the Soviet schools and children's homes have received no moral principles: they have been used to selfwill and freedom from punishment, and from the earliest age they have been surrounded by examples of depravity and license. They have increased the already enormous number of those of the older generation who took part in the Communistic "coup", passed through the ranks of the Red guard, and learned the "lessons" of civil war, with all its lawlessness and oppression of defenceless populations, and were encouraged by the Bolsheviks, who at the time had given the Red hordes absolute "carte blanche". Such periods of extreme license as that of the civil war have not passed without leaving their mark; the "senior generation" of Bolsheviks cannot or will not even now restrain themselves. The Bolshevik propaganda against the family, respect for old age, and religion, together with the Bolshevik condonation of vice, sexual immoderation, selfwill, and lawlessness, has borne fruit.

A wave of immorality has inundated the country and penetrated everywhere. The very coarsest perversity and the basest and most unrestricted hooliganism are rife.

It is not easy to give the reader even a slight idea of what is going on at the present moment in this respect in the Communist earthly paradise. In Soviet Russia it is dangerous to venture out of doors in the evening. At dusk the streets are entirely in the power of numerous gangs of hooligans. Passers-by, not only on the outskirts, but in the central districts of Soviet towns and villages run the risk of being set upon by these gangs. The hooligans undress the people in the street, leaving them in nothing but their undergarments or even quite naked; they chase them and force them to submit to all kinds of mockery and insults. Beatings and violations are everyday occurrences in the streets, not only in remote places but even in the most important centres of the country, not excluding Moscow itself.

Nothing affords better evidence of what is going on in Soviet cities than the Soviet decrees forbidding hooliganism. Among many similar local decrees issued by the Soviet powers one, issued by one of the provincial executive committees, ran as follows: " It is forbidden in public places to jostle 'single' citizens, to pester passers-by, to throw objects from the theatre galleries upon citizens in the stalls, to trip up citizens, to tear their clothes, to frighten them by wearing bed sheets in imitation of ghosts; it is forbidden to spit upon citizens' clothes, to pour water on them, to throw mud at them, to smear them with tar, to break down trees, to smash fences and to pull up flowers; it is forbidden to stretch ropes across the road, to place tree trunks in the roadways, or to dig holes in the roads; it is forbidden to frighten horses and other animals; it is forbidden to commit a public nuisance in the streets." To what depths must morality have sunk that it should be necessary to forbid the citizens of the free Soviet Republic to commit such acts!

To what length some of the hooligans will go and to what extent they consider themselves immune from

punishment may be gauged by an incident which took place in my presence in the city of Rostov-on-Don. The victims were people I knew quite well.

At the corner of the central street, Friedrich Engels (formerly the Bolshaya Sadovaya) and Tkatchevsky Street, in Rostov, stands the building of the Don Executive Committee of the Soviets (the Donispolkom). Opposite to it there is a small square laid out on the site of the Cossak Hundred Barracks, which were one night destroyed by the Bolsheviks.

One night a man and his wife, were returning from a theatre, between 12 and 1 o'clock, along Tkatchevsky street. They were only a few steps past the Sadovaya when they were surrounded by a group of about ten hooligans, who formed a ring round them and threatened them with revolvers and knives. They told them to undress, and with blows and knife pricks forced them to obey. When the unfortunate couple had undressed, under a hail of jibes and insults, five of the hooligans took the husband to a post not far away and forced him to lick off with his tongue the bills that were posted on it. In the meantime his wife was being violated by the whole group. When the violation was completed and his wife had fainted the gang threatened the husband if he dared to shout, and then disappeared with all their clothes. As a result the poor woman went mad. The culprits were never found: indeed I very much doubt if any attempt was ever made to find them.

In the city of Rostov alone I have known too many similar exploits which have never been punished; scarcely a night passes without some such occurrences taking place there. I was, perhaps, fortunate in being able to raise slightly the curtain of secrecy which hides the identities of some of these hooligan-criminals and the reason for their immunity.

I have already explained how the true state of Soviet Russia is concealed from the foreign visitor

and how he is spied on by G.P.U. agents. Naturally I was not exempt from this espionage, and moreover, in view of my position, I was allotted a particularly large "guard of honour."

Among other secret collaborators of G.P.U. who were watching over me was one very prominent, named B. L. Shapiro, brother-in-law of the notorious Zagorsky, formerly plenipotentiary of the G.P.U. in Odessa and now the chief of the G.P.U. of the whole of Ukraine. However cunning these people thought themselves, they did not quite succeed in preventing me from seeing what interested me. In this instance I was even greatly assisted by their simplicity and talkativeness.

B. L. Shapiro, who had been employed in the Odessa G.P.U. when his brother-in-law vacated the post, was transferred to the *entourage* of his personal friend, Comrade Minaiev, chief of the economic department (E.K.O.) of the P.P.G.P.U. of the Northern Caucasus, in Rostov-on-Don. It was from Comrade Shapiro that I learned of the following incident:—

At about one o'clock one morning in August, 1925, soon after his appointment as chief of E.K.O., Comrade Minaiev was returning to his home in the Middle Prospect with his assistant. Suddenly, as they were walking along Friedrich Engels Street, near the house of the "Sovprov", they were attacked by two ruffians who sprang from the corner of the Voroshilov Prospect, pointed their arms at the Tchekists, and called on them to halt. Having looked them up and down to see what they had worth taking, they ordered, "You take off your leather jerkin and you your boots! And be quick about it!" The Tchekists pretended to submit and began to undress; then suddenly they in their turn whipped out their revolvers and called on their assailants to put their hands up.

The episode looked like ending in a general fusillade,

but at that moment a lorry full of Tchekists appeared on the scene, a detachment which was returning from Nakhitchevan after having carried out a night search in the houses of people suspected of counter-revolutionary tendencies. The occupants of the lorry noticed the commotion and without much argument took all four persons prisoner and carried them off to Friedrich Engels Street, No. 33, the G.P.U. Then came the "*coup de théâtre*": in the victims of the assault they recognised their own superiors, and in the attackers one of the senior agents of the criminal investigation department and the assistant of Comrade Khoudojnikov, the head of the department. What a picture!

The hooligans, robbers and assaulters had turned out to be of the "quality," and as such exempt from punishment.

The affair ended in a friendly debauch, begun at the G.P.U. and concluded at the Customs department, where the whole company adjourned in search of confiscated contraband in the shape of foreign liqueurs. The example set by such Soviet Officials is followed by others, particularly the *Komsomoltzy* (Communist boys). The *Komsomoltzy* are not content with the debauches and "Athenian nights" which they enjoy with the *Komsomolky* (Communist girls).

A Communist girl has no right to refuse a Communist boy the satisfaction of his animal needs; if she does, she is accused of having a "narrow" bourgeois outlook on life. But the depravity of the *Komsomol* exercises an influence beyond its own sphere, which accounts for deeds similar to that perpetrated at the Staro-Stcherbinovska station.

At the Staro-Stcherbinovska station, Cuban-Black Sea region, several *Komsomoltzy* dragged one of their companions, who was not a Communist, into an empty class-room and held her down by force: then the *Komsomoltzy* were admitted one by one and,

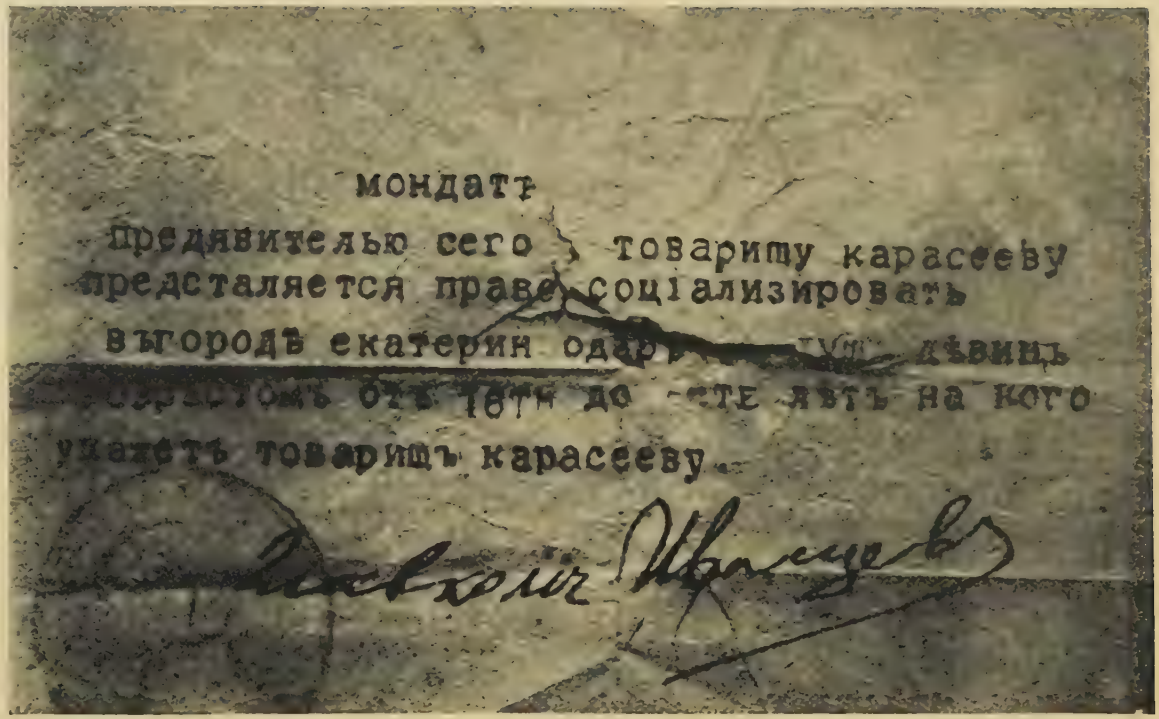
before their eyes and with their help, violated the girl. Twelve *Komsomoltzy* with the help of four *Komsomolka* deprived the girl of her virginity and subjected her to the most terrible tortures! But this sort of thing is rife in Soviet Russia.

In a second degree school in Rostov, 23 pupils, attending the evening class, enticed two girl-pupils into the stoke-room of the central heating and there violated them. One of the girls died as a result of the violence to which they subjected her, the other will remain a cripple for the rest of her life. In another school in the same city a whole class of boys, aged from 14 to 15, violated a teacher of quite advanced age during school hours. Such is the type of child produced by a Bolshevik upbringing.

The Soviet Power hushes up most cases of this kind, and does not allow any account of them to appear in print; but, from time to time, certain cases become generally known, and then they aver that they do all they can to discourage them by severely punishing all who are found guilty. This is nothing but a lie!

While I was in the Soviet prisons I had occasion to find that out. I met a great number of such criminals there, who were locked up merely for appearance's sake and for the shortest possible term; they were freed and pardoned extraordinarily quickly, none of them spending more than a few weeks in prison.

I shall quote a few facts to give the lie to the Soviets. At about 10 o'clock one morning in Moscow itself, near the Moscow Koorsk goods station, ten young hooligans, including a few *Komsomoltzy*, attacked a cook aged 59, who was returning from market. They knocked her off her feet, wound some bags round her head to prevent her shouting, dragged her behind the store houses near the station, and not only violated her, but mocked her in the most unnatural way. A group of militiamen caught five of




"The right to socialise ten young girls between the ages of sixteen and twenty in Ekaterinodar is granted by this mandate to Comrade Karaseeiev," *signed* "Glavkom Ivastchev."

*The word "socialise" means "to do as he likes with them."*

them who had stayed to mock the old woman, and arrested them. I happened to see them when they were brought to cell 55, in the Boutirky prison, where I was detained at the time.

During my stay in Soviet Russia I saw and heard many terrible and appalling things in that beautiful country, but I must confess I did not think it possible to hear anything so horrible as I actually heard from those young scoundrels in that cell. They boasted of their crimes with pride and related some of their former "recreations", as they called them, which surpassed anything that anyone could possibly imagine in the realm of crime and depravity.

These monsters were liberated by the magistrate sixteen days later; they were "of proletarian origin" and that atoned for their guilt. It is only the existence of the worst forms of immorality and general decay that enables the Communists to maintain their power. It was in the Boutirky prison also that I met a certain "Comrade Shootchev", the senior agent of the Tcheliabinsk T.O.G.P.U. (Transport O.G.P.U.). Shootchev was doing "time" for assault. An agent of G.P.U. arrested for assault!

I must admit that seldom have I been so astonished. I could not believe my ears, and I wanted at all costs to find out the truth of the matter. So I got into conversation with Shootchev, and this is what, to my disgust, I heard from him:

To begin with, Shootchev was at a loss to understand why he should have been imprisoned for such a trifle. It seems that when examining a train, and verifying the passengers' passports, which was part of his duties, he noticed and very much liked the look of two women, mother and daughter, as it turned out on examination of their documents. According to Shootchev's standards, if he liked them there was no need to stand on ceremony. So he pretended that their identification documents were not in order, had them arrested and taken off the

train, and gave orders that in an hour's time they should be brought to his office. Accordingly an hour later, having "questioned" the mother, he sent for the daughter, and, under the protection of the bayonets of his body-guard, violated her on the spot. "After having had some fun" (as he called it) for a few days, he let the luckless passengers go.

Then happened that which particularly offended Shootchev; let us hear his own words: "It is three years since I was appointed Senior Agent, and I have taken numbers of them from the trains for examination. I have supplied my superiors with plenty of pretty girls for "examination". How was I to know who they were? If I had known that they were the wife and daughter of a prominent party worker in Moscow, I would never have kept them. I never guessed where they came from. Suddenly, about a month and a half later, I was called up by the chief of our T.O.G.P.U. in Tcheliabinsk himself, and he said to me: 'Well, brother, you've put your foot in it this time. You'll have to go to prison. I can't help it; it's the Centre's orders', and then he explained that I had chanced on my superior's wife and daughter. But I've nothing to fear. The boss himself said: 'Don't worry, friend: you won't languish in prison for long for such a trifle. Never fear, we'll get you out'."

A little later, when I had been sentenced to deportation from U.S.S.R. and was awaiting execution of the sentence in the "working wing" (the wing where the condemned serve their sentences), Shootchev also appeared there. He had been sentenced to 10 years Concentration Camp, but he laughed and assured me that he would never even spend a year there.

A month later he actually sent in a petition asking for his punishment to be reduced, pleading that he had always been a good worker, and two weeks after that he was informed that his term of punishment

had been reduced to three years. "You see", Shootchev said to me, "whichever Party Chief's wife and daughter they may have been I obviously cannot be expected to stick in prison for their sake. It is bad enough to have been arrested". A few days later he said to me: "The boys from Tcheliabinsk tell me that I ought to petition again; they say everything is prepared; that my sentence will be reduced and I shall be set free. But I shall be more careful next time. They won't catch me again."

Before I left the prison, Shootchev had already been told that in a day or two he would be given his liberty, and of course he was. It must be understood that *in Soviet Russia collaborators of O.G.P.U. are not subject to trial;* they are only subject to administrative punishment imposed by G.P.U. itself, and—this is particularly important—after serving their sentences the criminals are reinstated in their old jobs. They are considered to have completely wiped out their guilt by serving the sentence.

Shootchev, who by the way is the father of a family of three children, is now at his post again and probably still conducting "examinations" and supplying his superiors with pretty girls for the same foul purpose.

One shudders to think how many Shootchevs there may be in Soviet Russia now.

But however horrifying these occurrences are one can scarcely expect anything better in a country where the family is persecuted and where even the slightest form of marriage is dispensed with.

The only form of marriage-service in U.S.S.R. is a kind of legalised parody of what we know by that name, and every citizen has an unchallenged right to marry and divorce any number of times, even on the same day.

For a divorce hardly any formalities are required. It is sufficient for husband *or* wife to visit "Z.A.G.S."

(registration of acts of civil status), one of the sub-departments of the Executive Committee, and make a declaration and the divorce is accomplished and legally ratified. The consent of the second party to the marriage is not necessary and the second party is only informed when his or her address is known.

I have known people who had divorced 50 or 60 wives, people who had married their nearest relations, people who were openly living with others of their own sex, under the protection of Soviet laws of the U.S.S.R., which only punishes such relationships in the territory of the Transcaucasian Union of Federated Soviet Republics, the most negligible part of the Soviet territory. At one time I was living at the Stanitza Novoleoushkovska (Cuban-Black Sea region) in a house, part of which had been allocated to the local Z.A.G.S. There I saw the most amazing marriages and divorces.

Once, I remember, two brothers, Communists named Teslenko, brought their wives to the Z.A.G.S. Both couples gave notice of divorce. Within a quarter of an hour they had received a certificate of divorce and on the very spot, so as not to lose their position in the queue—there were so many registering that they had to take their turns—they gave notice of their intention of contracting fresh marriages, each with the former wife of his brother; in short, they exchanged wives. I spoke to them immediately their marriages had been "solemnised", and asked them why they had exchanged wives in this way. I was answered in the most casual manner, as if it were a most commonplace matter, "We have been living with them for two months, and we were getting rather tired of it, so we changed round. It is good to have a change sometimes."

Moral depravity has become so universal in Russia that people scarcely seem to know the meaning of the word. Not only has abortion been legalised,

but a special scale "for the satisfaction of requirements" has been introduced in view of the exceptional demand. According to the Soviet law the following precedence is established:

1st claim—Women workers and wives of workmen.
2nd claim—Civil servants (women) and wives of civil servants in Soviet institutions.
3rd claim—Women employed or wives of persons employed in free professions and peasant crafts.
4th claim—All others.

These horrors are being carried out methodically and according to plan!

As a further illustration of the moral decadence of Soviet Russia I will describe an attempt which was made during my stay there to conduct a campaign of flagrant brazenness, a campaign against shame and against covering the body with clothes.

In 1925 a society called "Down with Shame" was organised and legally registered. The members of the society undertook not to wear any clothes, and by way of propaganda some of them were sent on tour. One of the groups was proceeding via Moscow, Kharkov, Rostov, Mineral Waters. I saw them with my own eyes, when they were in Rostov-on-Don. I was passing near the Pokrovsky Market at the corner of Friedrich Engels Street and Bogatianovsky Street when I saw a man and a woman absolutely naked standing near a stationary tram. Even the savages of the Polynesian Archipelago wear some kind of *cache sex*, but this couple only wore a kind of sash, and that across their shoulders! It was a red ribbon with the slogan: "Down with the bourgeois superstition—shame." In justice to the woman I must add that she also carried a kind of handbag in her hand! While I was looking at them, overcome by astonishment, a crowd assembled, and also a few militiamen to protect the naked couple.

The crowd, among which were many people from the market, market girls, etc., were pelting them with tomatoes, eggs, and stones. But when the tram got moving the naked couple triumphantly entered it. In a second the disgusted passengers began to pour out. Once more the tram got under way in a hail of apples, stones, eggs, and similar missiles, empty now except for the naked man and woman and the unfortunate victim of duty, the conductor. About an hour later, when passing the General Post Office, I saw a huge crowd demanding the extradition of the representatives of the "Down with Shame" society. It appears that, fleeing from the wrath of the crowd, they took refuge in the post office. The Communist "cell" of the post office gave them some clothes and let them out by a back door. Such was the effect they produced in the city of Rostov. They produced a much greater disturbance and scandal in other cities.

The Soviet powers, seeing that this kind of propaganda was not only abortive but threatened the "people without shame" with lynching, quietly liquidated the society after about a month, and abandoned the attempt.

The scope of this book does not allow me to enlarge further on the decay in this sphere of life in the Soviet land, but I hope I may have given the reader some idea of the moral depravity and chaos to which the Communists have brought the country under their control.

It is only natural that the physical health of the population should have been largely affected by this moral anarchy.

Such a universal epidemic of immorality could not but involve an enormous increase of illness in general and of venereal diseases in particular. Depraved persons no longer consider it a crime to infect their friends and relations with the venereal disease they are suffering from themselves.

## THE DECLINE OF MORALITY

Statistics published by the Soviet scientist, Professor B. M. Kholtzov, show to what depths of immorality the people have sunk. Before the revolution in Russia out of 100 persons who contracted venereal diseases 7 infected their families; in 1918 (the 2nd year of Bolshevism) 33 per cent. infected their families; and in 1924, after seven years of Communist rule, this figure rose to 63 per cent.

To what extent venereal diseases are prevalent in U.S.S.R. may be judged from the following facts:—In the free students' dining-rooms maintained by the various Missions with which I was connected the percentage of venereally-infected students who received free food varied between 70 and 75 per cent. In the Northern Caucasus—part of my district—we registered regions, 80 to 95 per cent. of whose populations were suffering from venereal disease. Such was the case, for instance, in Kabarda-Balkarska Autonomy, Karatchaevo-Tcherkess Autonomous region, Adygeisk-Tcherkess Autonomous region, Tchechensk Autonomous region, and many others. Even Soviet statistics admit a 30 per cent. average of infection for the whole of Soviet Russia.

So much for venereal diseases; but other diseases have progressed just as much. For instance malaria, formerly only the scourge of southern climates, has now spread through Soviet Russia as far as the polar circle. Epidemics have occurred in Archangel, Kemy, and Solovetzky. Such an increase of disease in the Soviet Union naturally provokes an enquiry as to the means employed by the authorities to combat them The state of sanitation in U.S.S.R. is lamentable, and the authorities do very little to improve it, as is well illustrated by the difficulties which they placed in the way of the Mission of the Holy See and the Verelief when they endeavoured to open up dispensaries in the South East.

These Missions, seeing the insufficiency of the medical help rendered by the Soviets in combating

disease, and the almost complete absence of medical supplies, offered to open free dispensaries. In reply the Soviet powers stipulated first and foremost that the major part of the medical supplies, which the Missions received from abroad, should be handed over to them, and furthermore they refused to grant them premises for dispensaries. When, however, the Verelief Mission independently found premises and equipped a dispensary, the Soviets bluntly forbade them to use the premises and insisted on their closing the dispensary immediately.

This is all the trouble the Soviet power takes for the health of its people. But the extent to which Soviet medical aid is able to wrestle with the catastrophic spread of diseases is indicated by the conditions under which Russian doctors have to work under the Communist rule. Two typical cases will suffice to show how the Soviets allow doctors to be thrashed with impunity.

In the North Caucasian Hospital, formerly called the hospital of the Wladicaucase Railway, the senior Doctor B—— R—— was thrashed by a workman whose wife he could not, according to Soviet regulations, allow to be taken in at the Railway Hospital because her husband was not a railway worker. When the doctor advised the husband to take his wife to the Hospital of the Professional Union to which he belonged, he was set upon and so belaboured by the workman that he was obliged to lay up in his own hospital for 8 days. There was never even any question of punishing the workman. Ten days after his recovery, this same doctor received a second thrashing, this time executed by inmates who were undergoing treatment there, because he had taken no notice of a suggestion made to him by a Communist nurse, who wished a patient to be discharged as completely cured, whereas he thought that the patient required further treatment.

In the same hospital during the same week a young doctor, newly-attached to the hospital, was thrashed by his patient because the latter did not like the way in which the doctor did his dressing. The result was that the doctor himself required dressings! Such incidents occur every day in Soviet Russia between doctors and patients. It is evident that medical help is a practical impossibility under such conditions.

In every country there are elements in the population inclined to hooliganism, lawlessness and license, but the law exists to restrain them with the fear of punishment. But in U.S.S.R. the law encourages these elements which they consider "proletarian", (*vide* article of the Communist woman Smidovitch in the "Pravda"). When the hooligans begin to attack the Soviet power by murdering militiamen, party workers, and other representatives of the Soviet power, the Communists begin to look up, but too late! Having made their bed, they must lie on it. Those who have destroyed morality are powerless to re-establish it.

# CHAPTER VIII

## RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION AND THE STATUS OF THE CHURCH IN U.S.S.R.

THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION AS AN INFLUENCE for the subjugation of man's animal instincts and the building-up of moral strength is universally recognised.

Communism alone denies it. But Communism is a disintegrating force, whereas religion is in a sense its direct antithesis. The Communists know that their power depends solely on the moral decay of the population.

If there is one force which upholds order and balance, which develops morality, which humanises and subjugates the animal impulses of the human being, and which fights with evil, it is religion. For this reason religion is an obstacle in the path of Communism. It is an enemy, which the Communists do their best to destroy. It is either religion or Communism. They cannot exist together.

Arguing in this fashion, the Communists declared war upon religion and created the so-called "religious front". The very name indicates what a strategic importance they attach to the task. The Bolsheviks decided to place the Church outside the law. They forbade every kind of religious instruction, even outside the schools and in spite of the express wish of the parents.[1] The schools were ordered to teach atheism. But they did not stop at that, for during the first years of their power ministers of the Church in Soviet Russia were mocked, unfrocked, forcibly and blasphemously

[1] Very rare exceptions were sometimes made in respect of Mohammedans, for political reasons.

"married to horses, shot, and generally speaking subjected to the worst possible forms of persecution. The churches were desecrated and sacked, some were closed: others were used by the Bolsheviks as cinemas, clubs, barracks, and stables.

But instead of destroying religion the Bolsheviks only succeeded in increasing the religious fervour of the masses. Popular risings were provoked by the desire of the people to defend the church. Waves of public indignation threatened to sweep away the Soviet power, which retreated, but did not surrender. The wholesale killing of the priests and the closing of churches were stopped for a time, but although the Bolsheviks slackened their frontal attack on the church, they tried to break it down by a "flanking movement": they organised a split in the predominant church of Russia.

This briefly is the history of the Soviet powers' fight with the church up to the moment when the Communists decided to change their methods.

In the Communists' fight against the church three distinct phases can be discerned: (*a*) propaganda against religion and the encouragement of ruffianly attacks upon the church, in particular by the *Komsomol* youths, (*b*) legislative and fiscal pressure brought about by the state, and (*c*) direct persecution by the help of O.G.P.U. which supports all who help to disintegrate and weaken the church. I shall try to illustrate by occurrences I myself have seen in Soviet Russia all the different aspects of the warfare conducted by the Communists against the churches.

In Rostov-on-Don I saw several anti-religious processions. They are organised by the *Komsomol* on the eve of the great annual holidays, particularly before Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, etc. The Communists spare no pains or money for the success of such anti-religious demonstrations. They supply the *Komsomol* with all the necessary funds and other

requirements such as motor-cars and body-guards; in short everything they want.

One such procession took place in Rostov-on-Don on March 25th, 1927, on the day of the Annunciation of the Holy Virgin. Several lorries decorated with anti-religious slogans led the procession. Some of these slogans were too blasphemous to repeat: others were only slightly less outrageous, such as "Religion is the opium of the people"—"Religion is a deception, a tool in the hands of the bourgeois for the enslavement of the working class"—"Down with the Gods; to the rubbish heap with them"— "Communism will dispel the religious mist"—"Cardinals, Rabbis, Mullahs, Pastors, and Priests are our worst enemies" —"Always ready to kill the priests,"—etc.

On the lorries the *komsomoltzy* had arranged tableaux, than which it is impossible to imagine anything more coarse and blasphemous. In the front of the first lorry sat a *komsomoletz* on a throne representing an Archbishop: with one hand he was blessing the crowd, who were gazing in terror on the blasphemy, while with the other he was caressing and fondling a *komsomolka*, who represented the Virgin Mary. Behind him stood a *komsomoletz* in a red cloak, representing a Cardinal blessing a workman who was kneeling before him: he was nodding to the workman, and at the same time handing a pair of handcuffs to a capitalist in a silk hat and receiving in exchange a bag of money. Behind these was a *komsomoletz* made up like a priest of the Russian Church; he was holding a cross in one hand and in the other a bottle of vodka from which he was continually taking sips. Around them were several *komsomoltzy* disguised as monks, posing in cynical attitudes, flirting with the *komsomolky*, and singing the most obscene and blasphemous songs set to well-known church music. There were in all some ten lorries with similar slogans and tableaux.

A typical scene, showing Red soldiers despoiling a Russian church marked down for dynamiting.

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After having travelled through all the principal streets under the protection of a specially reinforced military guard, the procession arrived at Rostov Cathedral at about 11.30 a.m., just as the service was over. Here, in full view of the faithful, they made a bonfire of ikons and began to burn effigies of the holy Saints. Gibbets were set up round about, upon which amidst shouting and laughter were hung effigies of Jesus Christ, Jehova, Buddha and Mohammed. Then for about half an hour the *komsomoltzy* and *komsomolky* indulged in round-dances about the fire and gibbets, accompanied by the most obscene and blasphemous oaths and songs.

I will now give an instance of the many individual deeds of the hooligan-*komsomoltzy* in the churches during holiday services. At Easter, 1926, I was present at the midnight service in the Church of All Saints in the Novoposselensky churchyard in Rostov-on-Don. The church was so full that the people who had failed to gain admittance were crowding round the entrance and on the steps leading up to it. Round the church, a few hundred *komsomoltzy* and *komsomolky* were seated on the graves nearest to the church. To the accompaniment of some 40 to 50 accordions, balalaikas, trumpets, whistles, and hooters they were drinking, indulging in immorality, and singing obscene and blasphemous songs. But they soon became aware of the fact that, however much noise they might make, they were unable to disturb the prayers of the believers. Thereupon they managed to get one of their members quite drunk, and by egging him on and mocking him they prompted him to commit a more decisive act of blasphemy.

The drunken *komsomoletz* with a few confederates went into the church, and the crowd, ignorant of his intentions, allowed him to approach within quite a short distance of the Altar only a few minutes before the singing of the troparion announcing the Resurrection of Christ. He tottered up the steps,

making straight for the Golden Gates with the obvious intention of provoking a disturbance. The congregation was aghast and dumfounded, but the officiating priest did not lose his presence of mind; he quickly barred the way to the *komsomoletz* and stood between him and the Golden Gates, holding high the Cross in his hands before him. The *komsomoletz* stood still, turned as pale as death, and then stepped back from the priest, who was advancing upon him: he gave way to the Cross. As he stepped back he fell from the steps straight into the arms of the congregation. In an instant he was picked up, lifted over their heads, passed from hand to hand, and flung out of the church.

The dissatisfied *komsomoltzy*, irritated by their ill success, redoubled their mockeries, and at the very moment of the proclamation: "*Christ has Arisen!*" the electric light in the church went out unexpectedly: the *komsomoltzy* had cut the wires. But again they failed in their endeavour. The congregation immediately bought the whole stock of candles that were in the church and lit them. The service became more beautiful, more mysterious: a mystical feeling of the nearness of the Divine Mystery took possession of the congregation and their prayers became more fervent.

In consequence the Soviet powers made a scapegoat of the priest who had shamed the *komsomoletz*, and he is now serving a sentence on the Solovetzky Island.

But it is not only the churches that the blasphemous Bolsheviks mock: they also mock the dead. I choose an instance at random. Near the Nikolayevsky Hospital, in Rostov (now, of course, it bears a different name), was a chapel, in a vault beneath which were buried the Poustovoytovs, husband and wife, who during their lifetime had been great philanthropists. They had built several wings of the Nikolayevsky Hospital, several wings of the Rostov Almshouses, and the

church attached to them. It was with their money that the Church of the Intercession of the Virgin Mary had been built.

Upon the advent of the Bolsheviks the chapel was taken for a "Mestkom" (Committee of the employees) of the Hospital, but the profanation of the chapel did not end there. In 1925 the Communist woman-secretary of the "Mestkom," who had her lodging at some distance from her place of duty, conceived a wish to live nearer. For a long time she was looking round but could find nothing in view of the housing crisis; suddenly she was struck by a bright idea: she could live quite close by if the dead were "evicted" and she could take possession of the vault!

Within a few days her wish was realized. The dead were taken out of the vault and left lying outside. The disinterment was witnessed by a small crowd of people who somehow had heard of the decision of the Communist "cell." Remembering the many good deeds of the Poustovoytovs, the people asked for permission to take the bodies and accord them a second church burial. The reply to this request was received in a few days. The Communists were prepared to hand over the bodies but they claimed the zinc coffins as being of some value! Under these circumstances the coffins had to be opened and the dead transferred to new wooden ones. When the first coffin was opened (that of the husband) it was found that his body had been completely reduced to dust. But when his wife's coffin was opened, it was discovered that in spite of the twenty years or so which had elapsed since the day of her funeral the body was quite fresh and unharmed, as if she had only just passed away.

The rumour of this discovery spread rapidly all over the city, and through the surrounding villages, and thousands of people came to verify it with their own eyes.

They recalled the life of the deceased, her great benefactions and her strict faith, and the city of Rostov and the whole country round about spoke of nothing else but this "miracle".

At the second funeral the clergy of all the Rostov churches officiated. In spite of the prohibition by the Soviet powers church banners were carried at the funeral, and the procession, numbering many thousands, which passed through the city, was indeed a triumph for religion. The Bolsheviks found themselves powerless in the face of the believing population.

The fact that the Bolsheviks coveted the zinc coffins is significant, for this was by no means an isolated instance.

When, two months later, two Tchekists were found murdered by some unknown persons on the Temernik, a suburb of Rostov, it was decided that they should be buried in zinc coffins—wooden ones were not considered commensurate with their "rank". But, as in U.S.S.R. to-day it is almost impossible to find any zinc at all, to say nothing of zinc coffins, the Bolsheviks resolved to borrow them from the old *régime*, as they put it. They calmly appeared at the Novoposselensky cemetery, entered one of the rich vaults, took the dead out of their coffins, and buried "their own" in them. The dead "bourgeois" were simply left on the floor of the vault and the administration of the cemetery had to fill in the vault in order to bury them.

The direct pressure exercised by the authorities on the church is particularly evident in the refusals on the part of local executive committees to register religious communities, and in the excessive taxation on all church property and the priesthood. The Soviet power has decreed that all church property, buildings and all former possessions of the church belongs to the civil authorities. These authorities may hand over churches and the property belonging to them only to legally organised and registered

communities of believers who are then held personally responsible for the safety of such property and the timely payment of the taxes.

In a country where people are being persecuted, imprisoned, and even shot for their religious beliefs, it requires a certain amount of courage to place one's name on the list of those on whose personal guarantee the church is being handed over to the community. The believers know to what persecution, if not punishments, they will expose themselves simply by becoming known to the authorities as members of such a community.

But this does not stop them. The Bolsheviks relied on the hope that the fear of being "marked down" would prevent many people from offering their support, and that some of the churches, not having collected the required number of signatures (several hundred are required), would finally be taken over by themselves and thus abolished.

When the Bolsheviks realized their mistake, they endeavoured to put as many difficulties as possible in the way of the faithful. I have known of a community in the city of Taganrog who, in spite of the fact that they had the necessary number of members prescribed by the law, were refused registration for several months. At one time the pretext was that the percentage of workmen was insufficient. Then formalities were imposed which it was impossible to carry out; for instance it was required that every individual member of the community should come in person to sign the register at the offices of the North-Caucasian district executive committee, some 65 kilometres away. When I left Rostov, in spite of the fact that they had been petitioning for over a year, the community had not yet received their church.

The Bolsheviks not only try to prevent the formation of new communities, but they do all they can to place those already in existence in the most impossible circumstances. Their favourite method

is the most extravagant taxation. A typical example was that of the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary in Rostov-on-Don which in 1925 was taxed to the amount of 70,000 roubles, more than £7,000. Another church, that of All Saints, attached to a cemetery and, having a very small congregation, was taxed 20,000 roubles, over £2,000. All taxpayers, even private traders, are allowed to pay their taxes in four quarterly instalments, but churches must pay them all in advance. In the event of a church being unable to pay, all members of the community are held liable to the extent of all their possessions, and at the same time the church is sealed up. But so far there is not a single case on record in which the Bolsheviks have been able to break down the perseverance of the faithful and to close a church for default of payment of taxes. When they threatened to close the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, subscription lists began to circulate throughout the city and in spite of the poverty of the population the whole amount required to save the church was collected within a few days.

The faithful denied themselves everything; I know of instances where people, having of their own free will given all they had, were forced in consequence to endure several days of hunger, but their church was saved.

The churches are also forced to pay for water and electricity at a rate which is double that charged even to the "N.E.P.M.E.N." (private traders). All churches are subject to such unbearable taxation, with one exception. Special privileges are enjoyed by the so-called "living" or "obnovlentcheska" church which broke away from the proper Russian or "Tikhonovky" church. In Rostov-on-Don, for example, where I knew many of the clergy, I heard of a case from the interested parties themselves. One of my acquaintances, a priest of the "living church," Father Alexis, was assessed at 160 roubles (£16),

whereas another of my acquaintances, a priest faithful to the teachings of Patriarch Tikhon, Father Vladimir, had to pay 6,000 roubles (over £600), nearly 38 times as much. But the "living church" is not only privileged in respect of taxation: its principal privilege is its immunity from all persecution by O.G.P.U.

During my detention in Soviet prisons I met quite a number of clergy. All of them were priests of the Roman Catholic or the main Russian Church. The astounding fact was that all the representatives of the Russian church were adherents of the so called "Tikhon" church. *In the prisons I never met a single representative of the "living church."*

As one who had to come into very close contact with the Russian clergy in Soviet Russia, one thing became exceptionally clear to me, *the close and intimate connexion between G.P.U. and the "living church."* Many incidents which took place under my very eyes have convinced me of it. Many of my good friends from the clergy of the "Tikhon" church were hailed to G.P.U. where they were bluntly asked to join the "living church" and to communicate information about their flocks. G.P.U. forced them under threat of reprisals to disclose the secrets of confession and required written statements on the subject. The perfectly natural refusal was punished with arrest and banishment.

Many such mute inglorious priests have been banished to the Solovetsky Island and Siberia? Many of them are now suffering in captivity. I myself know of dozens of such cases among clergymen of my acquaintance, but I also know of many more cases of people who were arrested and deported as a result of confession to priests of the "living church." Things said at confession became known to G.P.U. and the Tcheka. Obviously I cannot mention names and facts here, for fear of increasing the number of the victims of the Bolshevik terror.

But it has pleased God to call unto Him one of these martyr-priests and thus to release him from the hands of the executioners. I can therefore place the facts of his case on record.

At the head of the Church of All Saints in Rostov stood the universally loved and respected Priest, Father John Gegoolenko, a graduate of the Ecclesiastical Academy. I had been on terms of intimate friendship with Father John for more than twenty years, but during the last days of his life I was with him particularly often. At the time of the separation of the "living church" Father John was one of the most active people to condemn the "obnovlentzy", and with a number of other priests he was imprisoned in the G.P.U. prison in Rostov, Bolshaia Sadovaia No. 33, for resisting the "living church." For more than a year he was kept there; nearly every week during that time he was brought before the chief of the religious sub-section of G.P.U. and offered immediate freedom on condition that he joined the free church. In the prison he was forced to meet representatives of the "living church" who offered him high office and warned him that he would perish in prison if he did not give in. Many were the threats and torments that Father John suffered in the G.P.U. dungeons, and in the end he discovered the close connection and subordination of the Obnovlentzy to G.P.U. As a result of the hardships of the prison life and the moral suffering he had endured, Father John broke down, and for many a long day he was on the verge of death. The tchekists, on hearing from the medical reports that he had not long to live, decided that he was no longer of any use to them: so the sick and dying man was released from prison. The parishioners conveyed their sick pastor to one of the church lodges, where with careful tending he began to recover.

During the long hours which I spent in conversation with the convalescent man he often told me that he

expected to be arrested again at any moment and that in spite of his apparent recovery he felt the end to be near. Sure enough, a little later he was called out by G.P.U., and although he was not arrested he was once more threatened and ordered to join the "living church." After a few such visits to G.P.U. Father John again fell ill and took to his bed, never to rise again.

On the very day of his death Father John again received a summons to appear before G.P.U. They had barely had time to wash the dead man when a squad of tchekists arrived with an order to arrest him. Upon hearing of his death the tchekists demanded his body. "Our orders," they said, "are to bring him to G.P.U. dead or alive, we do not care which." But the crowd which had gathered successfully defended the body of their minister and saved it from profanation.

It is clear, then, that G.P.U. and the "living church" work hand in hand. But no help from O.G.P.U. can save the "living church." The faithful realised its real mission, and, understanding why the Soviet Power upholds it, they shrank from it. I have seen for myself that the buildings of the "living church" are almost empty while those of the "Tikhon" are overcrowded.

In remembrance of Father John the so-called "Brothers' Kettle" was instituted for feeding beggars, orphans, and unemployed. About 500 people received dinners from this kettle every day and were thus saved from almost certain death by starvation. But this good work, for the sole reason that it was undertaken by a Christian community, was forbidden by G.P.U.

Hand in hand with their efforts to uphold and strengthen the split in the Russian church the Communists are doing all in their power to close the churches, but it cannot be said that their efforts meet with much success.

Near the station of Rostov-on-Don, in the suburb of Temernik, not far from the Wladicaucas Railway Works, which were so successfully inspected by the British Trade Unionists, there is a church. Not long before I left Rostov the Communist "cell" of the Works called a general meeting of the workmen and put forward a resolution to build a club for the Railway workers on the site of this church, which it was proposed to demolish to provide bricks for the construction of the club. The workmen, many of whom are members of the church community, refused to pass the resolution. Neither the threats nor the entreaties of the Communist "cell" could move them. Realising that the workmen refused to subscribe to such a resolution, the speaker declared that the authorities would take no notice of the fact that the workmen, through lack of conscientiousness and "drugged by religious poison," did not wish it, and that the resolution would be carried into effect for their own good though against their will. This declaration brought the meeting to a close. The workmen were dispersing to their homes, when suddenly, before their eyes, the Communist, who had been dispensing blasphemy at the meeting, was caught by a passing train as he was crossing the railway line and killed on the spot.

This incident made such an impression on the workmen who considered it a divine judgment, that there and then, under the open skies, they carried a resolution to proceed immediately to the church and hold a service petitioning for the preservation of the church, and also to inform the authorities that only over their bodies would those who had designs upon it approach the church. The demonstration was attended by several thousand workmen, and the Bolsheviks did not dare to insist.

To-day in Soviet Russia a distinct religious revival is taking place, particularly among those sections of the community which were formerly noted for their

lack of faith. I know of many instances where collections were made among workmen for the erection of churches: I was in prison with workmen who were paying the penalty for it. I also know of instances where churches have been built in districts where the factory workers were formerly noted for their strong Communistic propensities and irreligion (the Factory "Communistic Avangyarde"—7,000 workmen in the city of Vladimir; the "Red October" factory—2,000 workmen in the city of Penza; "Manufactura Yartzev"—8,000 workmen in the department of Smolensk; etc.). I even know of hundreds of former convinced Communists who, while afraid to leave the party in which they have met with nothing but disappointment, are stealthily visiting the churches, offering up prayers, christening their children, and celebrating church marriages. I know several Communists occupying some of the most prominent positions in Soviet Russia (some even in the O.G.P.U.!) who have secretly returned to the fold of the church. The Bolsheviks, who have re-enacted the scenes of persecution of the early Christians in the time of the Emperors Nero and Julian and who have even exceeded them in cruelty, are no match for religion.

The more intense the anti-religious activities of the Soviets, the stronger is the light of the people's faith. Many even, who formerly despised and hated the Christian faith, have turned to embrace it. Stronger than ever the Cross shines over the suffering country, confounding its enemies, and we may yet look forward to the time when the hymn of peace shall sound throughout Russia—

*Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Amen.*

# PART III

## TERROR, THE RULER OF SOVIET RUSSIA!

# CHAPTER IX

## WHO RULES IN SOVIET RUSSIA?

THE SOVIET RULE PROCLAIMS ITSELF AS AN ELECTED AND popular rule. In reality it is neither the one nor the other. No government can be a popular one if it forbids its people to have any freedom of political opinion and if it does not allow them any freedom of speech.

The foreigner, visiting the Soviet Union, is struck by the number of papers and magazines published there. His first impression is that there exists a free Press in Soviet Russia. But if he looks into things more closely he will notice that every paper, every magazine, and every periodical bears the characteristic mark, "Organ of Z.K.V.K.P." (Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party), or "Organ of the Goubpartkom V.K.P. (b.)" (Provincial Party Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party), or the mark of some other Soviet.

In Soviet Russia the law establishes a peculiar state monopoly; it is not to be compared with our monopolies on matches and tobacco, etc. It is much more important and has much more far-reaching effects. The monopoly of the Press is virtually the monopoly of free speech. The Bolsheviks guard this monopoly with particular zeal; they know better than anybody else that the day it is abolished will be the last day of their power.

The steps taken to safeguard this monopoly are often ludicrous. For instance the "Glavlit," which is the supreme instance of the Communistic censorship and which has got everywhere "Goublits" (provincial) and "Oblits" (district) branches, has the sole

right to issue permits for printing. Not only books, papers and magazines, but even letter-headings and envelopes cannot be printed without the permission of the "Glavlit" and its branches. When I had occasion to order letter-heads for my branch of the various Missions, they first had to be submitted for examination to the "Donoblit" attached to the "Donkom" V.K.P. (b.) (the Don Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party), and at the bottom of my notepaper was the solemn inscription: "Authorised by Donoblit, registered No. so and so."

But in Soviet Russia it is not only forbidden to express one's opinions: it is also strictly forbidden even to have any.

The Soviet Power, when they declared all political parties except the Communist barred by law, placed before the population two alternatives, either that of favouring Communism or that of visiting one of the prisons of O.G.P.U. In the chapter dealing with the status of the workman in Russia I explained how the Soviet Power punishes people for having formerly belonged to other political parties, and in particular Socialist parties.

But the persecutions of this so-called popular government do not stop there. On the eve of elections and revolutionary holidays it regularly imprisons for a few weeks the comparatively few remaining Social revolutionaries and Mensheviks[1] so that they may not cause any mischief. In fact now, when one workman tells another that so-and-so has left for the G.P.U., they can calculate when the next revolutionary holiday is due, and if the calendar does not mention any such holiday in the near future they know that there will soon be another election.

This is certainly a peculiar calendar, which gives timely warning of revolutionary holidays and elections by the arrest of political opponents!

[1] The majority of these have been imprisoned since the first years of the Communist rule.

The Bolsheviks in U.S.S.R. openly poke fun at these elections. As representative of the Nansen Mission I often met the Secretary of the Don Executive Committee, Comrade Vinnikov, who later became the head of the Social Safeguards Department. Once, when I called at the Donispolkom to see this comrade on business, I learned from him that he was leaving Rostov. "Where are you going?" I enquired, and received the most extraordinary reply: "I have been *appointed* president of the Ispolkom (executive committee) in a city in Siberia. I must leave Rostov."

In accordance with the Soviet constitution the people elect their presidents of Soviets and these Soviets in turn elect the executive committees from among themselves. This proves that there are no elections, only *appointments!* It was in precisely this way that the former chief of the Don G.P.U., Comrade Ziavkin, was *appointed*, before my own eyes, to the post of president of the Taganrog Ispolkom. The appointment in the Rostov Ispolkom was not filled by a native of Rostov but by a man from the Volga, and Comrade Vinnikov was sent from Rostov to be president of the Ispolkom in Siberia, where, of course, he was quite unknown to the population. So what is the use of talking of "elections" in Soviet Russia! It is ridiculous to try to prove that they do not exist. They do not and will never exist under the Soviet *régime*. The Soviet power therefore is certainly not a people's, nor a workmen's, nor a peasants' power, as it styles itself, but a "party-power," a Communist power.

In Soviet Russia to-day there is not a "dictatorship by the proletarians," by which expression the Bolsheviks try to excuse their misdeeds, but rather, as the Russian workmen and peasants call it, a "dictatorship *over* the proletarians," a dictatorship by the Communist Party.

In U.S.S.R. only a Communist may hold so-called responsible positions; all governing power is, therefore, in the hands of Communists. But what is the

numerical importance of this ruling party? According to official statistics published by the Z.K.V.K.P. (Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party), on the 1st of January, 1927, the party numbered 733,174 members. This number is quite negligible when compared with the total population, which is about 150 millions. Compared with the total population the number of the Communists is about 0·5 per cent., and yet this 0·5 per cent. of the population has usurped the power and rules the remaining 99·5 per cent. by terror.

Of whom, then, is this All-Russian Communist Party composed? I have sought an answer to this question in conversations with Communists whom I met everywhere in U.S.S.R. Frequently my conversations with them were most candid, as I knew many of these men long before the Revolution and long before they joined the party. The most curious fact that struck me was that nowhere could I find one who was a Communist by conviction; even those who had joined the party from conviction and had subscribed to its programme were very soon disillusioned and made no bones about admitting it. Many of the more honest among them severed their relationship with the party, but as many threw all their Communist ideals to the winds, at the same time continuing to enjoy the privileges which their membership offered them.

The majority of the members of the Communist Party are Communists "for the sake of a livelihood"; without exaggeration they can be said to number 75 per cent. of the party. They only joined the party because it assured them of a livelihood. Members of the party are never out of work; on the contrary, they are sure of being able to obtain work, and well-paid work at that, for Communists fill all the best positions.

This is the fundamental difference between the Russian Communist party and foreign Communist

parties. In the latter the members (the rank and file, not the leaders) have not yet discovered the appalling difference between applied and theoretical Communism. For this reason the majority of them are still deceived by the "ideals" of the Communist doctrines.

After the Communists "for the sake of a livelihood" comes the group which may be called the "Self-seekers of the Revolution". A particularly striking example is the notorious Soviet Ambassador in France (who has also been in London), Comrade Rakovsky. His life story and his activities so vividly illustrate the "self-seeking" type of Communist that I will quote a description of him given by the world-renowned and highly-esteemed Russian revolutionary, Vladimir Boortzev, who knew Rakovsky well:

"By parentage Rakovsky is a pure Bulgarian. He was born when his parents were still Turkish subjects, and he is now about 53 to 54 years of age. In 1881 his parents moved into the Dobrudja, which after the Russian-Turkish war passed to Roumania, and they subsequently acquired an estate there. When a student, Rakovsky lived in different cities in Germany and Switzerland, and in France, in Nancy and Montpellier, where he received the diploma of Doctor. At that time he had already joined the International Socialist movement, and contributed to the Berlin "Vorwaerts" and to Russian socialistic publications. For his agitation he was more than once banished from Germany and from Russia. At that time he petitioned the French Government to allow him to become a naturalised Frenchman, but his petition was refused. Early in the 1900's Rakovsky's father died and left him an estate in Roumania worth about 200,000 francs. Only then did it occur to him that as the son of his father he could become a Roumanian subject, and he returned to Roumania. There he became an enthusiastic Roumanian patriot, took part in the

local municipal government, and was received in the army as a captain of the reserve. But, for his agitation against the army and for his articles about it in the Paris 'Humanité' (1907), he was soon deprived of all the social positions which he occupied. An enquiry instigated by the government proved him to be a foreigner, and as a result he was banished from Roumania. It was during his stay in Roumania that he helped to found the weekly paper, 'Labour Roumania' and the Social-Democratic Party. Rakovsky placed himself at the head of its executive committee. In 1912 he was again permitted to return to Roumania. There he joined the movement which advocated that Russia should cede Bessarabia. He sharply attacked the statesmen who in 1878 had permitted its incorporation with Russia, and he censured the Roumanian Government for having taken no steps since then to regain possession of Bessarabia. 'The incorporation of Bessarabia with Russia,' wrote Rakovsky in one of his articles, 'is one of the most cowardly acts of our oligarchy, which tries to shirk its responsibilities.' At the present time, Rakovsky, as the representative of the Bolshevik Revolution, is conducting a campaign against Roumania in connection with Bessarabia. A true adventurer, Rakovsky's opinions always depend on what advantage they offer for himself. Without a doubt, when it becomes necessary, he will be against the Bolsheviks just as he is now working for them. His Roumanian patriotism was closely connected with the international agitation which at that time (1912) the German General Staff supported systematically. From 1914 onwards Rakovsky allowed himself 'to be kept' by Germany, and became one of their most active agents; Rakovsky's party became feverishly active, and he himself conducted a fierce campaign in the Press against Russia and the Allies in general. In Bucharest and in the provinces there were endless demonstrations, and the mob destroyed the premises of the pro-Russian papers.

At the outbreak of the war the German Chauvinist S.D. Soudecum came to Bucharest from Germany and handed over to Rakovsky and his associates the sum of 30,000 gold marks to transform their weekly paper, 'Labour Roumania' into a daily one, called 'The Struggle.' Later, an active agitation started around this paper backed by German money. The Germans wasted enormous sums on the publication. In this way the Rakovsky gang delayed Roumania's entry into the war against the Central Powers, for a considerable time, and in the country itself they organised a considerable defeatist and desertion movement which hampered Roumania most seriously later on, when they joined the Allies. Later, at the bidding of Germany, Rakovsky and Parvus visited Italy, Bulgaria, and the Turkish Empire for the purpose of world propaganda. When, on his return from Italy, Rakovsky went back to Roumania he was arrested by the Roumanian authorities and imprisoned at Jassy. When, after the Russian Revolution in 1917, the Russian troops under the influence of defeatist propaganda decided on their own accord to return to Russia, they liberated Rakovsky from prison and took him with them. In Russia Rakovsky joined the Bolsheviks even before the latter usurped the power, and later on he became one of their most prominent and responsible Commissaries; in Odessa, Kiev and Kharkov he figured as the faithful interpreter of the wishes of Dzerjinsky and Lenin, in the rôle of hangman, executing all those who were not on the side of the Bolsheviks. During his stewardship the local prisons and tribunals supplied the most terrible pages of the history of Bolshevism. Yesterday Rakovsky was an executioner: to-day he is a diplomat: to-morrow, if necessary, he will again be an executioner.

In Odessa this former Roumanian patriot mercilessly exterminated all the Roumanian emigrants who sided with the Allies. Hundreds of parliamentary

functionaries and civil servants in Odessa were cast into the Bolshevik prisons, robbed, and beaten. They were tortured solely because they had sided with France. It was principally under the directions of Rakovsky that the Roumanian Embassy was arrested in Petrograd in 1917. Mr. Diamandi, the Roumanian Ambassador in Paris, who was himself arrested at the time is fully aware of this fact. What Roumania thinks of Rakovsky at the present time may be gathered from the fact that on the 31st March, 1921, the Roumanian Military Tribunal condemned him to death as a traitor and he was tried again in Bucharest for having taken part, with the help of Bolshevik agents, in acts of terrorism and an attempt to blow up the Senate."

Such a man was the former Ambassador of U.S.S.R. in France!

To illustrate the type of "self-seeker" of the revolution to be found among the officials of the Communist administration it will be sufficient to acquaint the reader with one of them, Comrade Bakhmatov, who occupied a fairly responsible post as Chief of the Administration of the North Caucasus district. At one time he was an ordinary locksmith working at the railway depôt near the Mineralny Vody station of the Wladicaucas Railway. Now he is a respectable gentleman with no concern for the workmen.

Once I had to go to the North Caucasian District Executive Committee to obtain certain information. I arrived at the office of the administration at 11 o'clock, not an early hour, and was told that the memorandum of the information I required had already been written out, but that I would have to wait a little as Comrade Bakhmatov had not yet arrived. A number of people were waiting for him, mostly workmen and peasants. I was very surprised and asked the secretary whether Comrade Bakhmatov

was still asleep at this time of the morning. "I have just 'phoned him," replied the secretary, "to say that you have called. At the moment he is in bed, drinking his morning chocolate, but it will not be long now before he arrives." This representative of the "People's Rule," as I learned later, does not like to be disturbed on account of a few workmen and peasants. It appears that the lady-secretary only dared to 'phone him "so early" because she was authorised to disturb her "chief" if anyone "of importance" should call.

There is a third section of the Communist Party, the members of which mostly enjoy direct power in the G.P.U. or in the local Executive Committees. It consists of the criminal elements of the old *régime*, who, from the very first days of Soviet Power, rushed headlong into the Communist party, because they realised that in this way they would be able to continue their criminal activities on a "legalised footing". In order to give the reader some idea of the extent to which this criminal group enjoys direct power I shall choose two examples, one taken from a village and the other from a town.

When I was living at the Stanitza Novoleoushkovska (Couban-Black Sea region) the president of the executive committee was the Communist Comrade Oobycon, a horse-stealer, well known to the population, who had been condemned before the Revolution to penal servitude for violating his 12-years-old sister. Before him this post had been held by Comrade Passetchny, a Communist and a former accomplice of Oobycon in his horse-stealing ventures, who in 1911 had, by a miracle, escaped being lynched by the people in the church square when six of a gang of eight horse-stealers were killed. Oobycon remained alive for the simple reason that he was serving his sentence in Siberia. Another scoundrel, Comrade Ozersky, was a member of the committee and the chief of the supply department. He had been a

well-known local thief, who specialised in stealing corn from store-rooms by boring holes in the floor. He had been beaten for it again and again and had served terms of imprisonment, but he still continued his activities. Finally, he was condemned to another 6 months and at the petition of the populace was banished from the district. To-day, under the Soviet Power, Comrade Ozersky occupies an important post, congenial to his speciality, grain.

The next member of the committee, Comrade Pikalov, who was at the same time the military commissary of the Stanitza, had served 6 years' penal servitude for robbery and murder at a Bank in Ekaterinodar.

At the risk of tiring the reader I cannot help introducing to him another member of this executive committee, Comrade Komov, chief of the Educational department. Comrade Komov, a former convict, liberated, as most of them were, by the Bolshevik Revolution, was serving a sentence for the murder of the Procurator of the city of Lougansk, Ekaterinoslav Government. The case received great publicity in Russia at the time. In conclusion I may add that the other members of the committee were no better than these.

And now let us consider the other example, this time from a town.

The president of the Executive Committee of Rostov-on-Don was Comrade Petrikeev. He did not belong to the district and I was unfortunately prevented from making enquiries as to his antecedents by my arrest. I am therefore not in a position to speak of him but must begin with his assistant, Comrade Tcherepakhin, who was employed up to 1906 in the workshops of the Wladicaucas Railway. In that year, owing to the increasing number of thefts of metals and tools, it became necessary to have the workmen searched on leaving the works, and the workmen themselves determined to find the

thief. He turned out to be the future assistant president of the Don Executive committee. The workmen's tribunal asked him to leave the works immediately. Tcherepakhin soon managed to get work as a carriage-cleaner at the station of Rostov-on-Don on the same railway. It was not long before he was caught red-handed stealing taps, mirrors, and other property from first-class compartments, and condemned to one year and nine months' imprisonment.

Another member of the committee, the head of the administrative department, Comrade Koshkintzev, had been convicted for the theft of material from the water works of the city of Novotcherkassk. Comrade Khoudojnikov, a notorious felon in South Russia, had on the day of the entry of the Red Army into Rostov been foremost among the thieves and hooligans who were anxious to burn the compromising documents and photographs taken from the Rostov Police Station. Comrade Khoudojnikov is now a member of the executive committee and head of the Criminal Investigation Department! Further instances would be superfluous: it is obvious of what elements these committees are composed.

The question now arises of who actually rules U.S.S.R.

The Communist Party is organised as follows: At the bottom are the Communist "cells," subordinated to the sub-provincial committees of the party, the "Ucoms." These in turn are subordinated to the provincial and district party committees, the "Goubkoms" and "Kraikoms," which are presided over by members of the party specially delegated from the central committee. The central committee of the Party, called for short Z.K., has for its superior the political bureau of Z.K., "The Politbureau." The Politbureau is composed of six persons who *de facto* govern the whole organisation. To-day the Politbureau consists of the General Secretary Stalin,

the head of the Politbureau, and the members, Rykov, Roudzutak, Ordjanikidze, Boukharin, and Tomsky.

As a matter of fact the dictatorial power is in the hands of the Secretary General of the W.K.P. (b), Stalin, whose real name is Djougashvili, (a Georgian).

The so-called Soviet Government, which comprises the Soviet of people's commissaries (Sovnarkom) and the central executive committee (Z.I.K.) of the U.S.S.R., is nothing but a formal term employed by the Bolsheviks in their relations with foreign countries.

The members of such institutions are mere puppets in the hands of the Politbureau.

For example a well known "Narkompros" (People's commissary for education) A. Lounotcharsky, has no right, even in his own Commission, to undertake anything on his own initiative, but only what is prescribed by the education department of the Z.K., presided over by Comrade Syrtzov. Officially the Minister of Education is Lounotcharsky, but in reality it is Syrtzov. The sign of the Ministry is at the Sretensky Boulevard No. 6, in Moscow but its office is really at the Old Square No. 4.

The following incident, which took place under my own eyes, will further corroborate the fact that the Government of U.S.S.R. is merely a screen for the Politbureau.

Comrade Kalinin, as one of the presidents of the Central Executive Committee, is accorded the power to pardon criminals by the constitution of U.S.S.R. He is, in fact, the official President of the Soviet Republic.

Comrade Kalinin was officially visiting the Northern Caucasus. Whether it was the feeling of being far from the centre, or whether it was that he had imbibed too freely, I do not know, but to the great

surprise of all those present he became very bold, and while in the City of Novotcherkassk, and later in Rostov, he ventured to pardon several prisoners in these two cities. The district committee of the Party in Rostov immediately telegraphed to the Centre asking what they should do, in the following words: "It would be embarrassing for us to arrest him; so we are awaiting your instructions." Unfortunately I did not have an opportunity of seeing the reply, but as a result Kalinin ended his presidential tour the very same evening and hurried back to Moscow, while the citizens he had liberated were quickly imprisoned again. When he reached Moscow Kalinin was severely reprimanded. He even had to submit to a term of what is known as "house arrest," during which it was officially given out that he was preparing his speech for the impending session of the Z.I.K.

It is clear, therefore, that even the most important ministers of Soviet Russia and the President of U.S.S.R. himself possess very little power, and one can imagine that the ordinary Communists have none at all. The rank and file of Communism can only vote on local questions. For the sake of trifling privileges and a certain license accorded to him the ordinary Communist becomes a "gendarme," and enforces in the provinces the orders given by the Politbureau. He may not hold an opinion of his own; all that is required of him is a blind submission to the instructions of the Politbureau.

A further proof of this will be found in the fact that the various dissensions in the party (such as the present opposition to Trotzky, and the former opposition to Shliapnikov), are nothing but internal quarrels in the party clique. The party majority, although at present favourable to "Trotzkyism," vote against Trotzky at the official meetings because this is required by the Politbureau which has the support of the O.G.P.U.; members of the Communist

Party in Russia are even more afraid of G.P.U. than ordinary citizens of the U.S.S.R., for they know better than anyone what it means and how it deals with recalcitrants. I have been told this by every Communist I have known.

Russia, then, is ruled by a small handful of men, who are not even Russians, but international adventurers and specialists in revolution, who by demagogic tricks have managed to seize the power. This oligarchy governs the Russian people. The peasant, the workman, the man of culture all groan under this yoke.

Foreigners often wonder why the people do not revolt and free themselves from this oppression. This may happen much sooner than is generally expected in Western Europe, and the western countries can accelerate the event by breaking off relations with the government of Soviet Russia.

One must take into consideration the size of the country and the difficulties which lie in the way of any attempt to organise such an enormous population, and also the terror, such as has never been known before, which has temporarily cowed the people. These things are severe handicaps. But in Russia the people's hatred of the Bolsheviks grows stronger every day and tends more and more to unite them. Already one feels that powerful anti-Communist nuclei are being formed.

The wave of the nation's united indignation is rising. The Bolsheviks feel this universal hatred and, in order to retain power a little longer, they are increasing their already incredible terrorism. For an impetuous word, an unwise acquaintance, or imprudent correspondence, people are shot, cast into prison, where they are tormented and tortured, or banished to Siberia, the Solovetzky Island, or the polar regions.

# CHAPTER X

## TERRORISM IN RUSSIA—THE O.G.P.U.

IN NO OTHER COUNTRY BUT U.S.S.R. DOES THE DEPARTment of political police constitute an independent ministry, but in U.S.S.R. it is the most powerful of them all. In every other country throughout the world the political police are merely an adjunct of the Home Government. The Soviet Power, by creating a unified state police department (O.G.P.U.), has proved to the whole civilised world that it maintains its power over Russia solely by means of terror and that the Russian people as a whole hate it wholeheartedly.

When the whole world learned of the monstrous wholesale executions perpetrated by the Extraordinary Commission (Tcheka), the Bolsheviks realised that the principal obstacle to their recognition *de jure* by the Western powers was the existence of this institution within their organisation; thereupon they pretended to reconstruct the Tcheka, for it was such recognition they wanted above all. But the abolition of the Tcheka would be tantamount to the abolition of the Soviet Power in Russia, since it is the only means by which that power is upheld.

The Bolsheviks in this instance acted in the same way as an unfortunate merchant when he is threatened with bankruptcy: he changes the name of his firm. The Tcheka was simply renamed O.G.P.U., but the same prisons, the same rights, the same collaborators, and the same methods of shooting were retained, and in the most disaffected districts even the old name was allowed to stand. So even now in Georgia,

Azerbeidgan, and Armenia, the G.P.U. is still called "Tcheka." The official plenipotentiary branch of O.G.P.U. in Transcaucasia is called officially Zak-Tcheka (the Transcaucasian Extraordinary Commission). The only difference between the old Tcheka and the present O.G.P.U. is that the old Tcheka carried out its shootings openly, whereas the G.P.U. in most cases endeavours to work secretly and to hide its shootings, which have by no means diminished.

The publicity given to the shooting of twenty people as a reprisal for the murder of the Soviet representative, Voikov, was exceptional: it is to be explained by the fact that the Bolsheviks realized that the population was getting out of hand owing to the breaking of diplomatic relations with England and the murder of the Soviet Ambassador in Poland, and they considered it necessary to frighten them again and so published a report of the shooting. The shooting of the twenty was not a new outbreak of terrorism: it was merely one of the episodes of the silent terror which reigns in Russia.

In U.S.S.R. one can never be sure of one's personal liberty and safety for a minute: human life there is of no account. While I was confined in the dungeons of G.P.U. hundreds of people were taken from the prisons and shot, and that at a time when the outside world was satisfied that the shootings in Soviet Russia had ceased.

One of the principal tasks of the Information Department of G.P.U. (Infag) is the censoring of correspondence. In Soviet Russia not a single letter can escape the "black chamber." An accident enabled me to verify this fact. Shortly before the liquidation of the Nansen Mission, when it no longer had its own couriers in Russia, I received from the Head Office a letter addressed to Mr. Simonett, representative of the Mission on matters connected with the repatriation of emigrants returning via Novorossisk. It so happened that on the day

before the arrival of the letter Mr. Simonett had left for Moscow. Thinking that this letter might still catch him in Moscow I wrote a covering note which, together with the letter, I enclosed *in a fresh envelope*. I was somewhat surprised to receive by the evening mail on the same day *the same letter* addressed to Mr. Simonett, the only difference being that it bore a new post mark. The fact that it escaped from my envelope and came back to me can only be explained in one way.

The letter had evidently been opened by the censor, who forgot to restore it to my envelope and sealed up both letters separately. The one proceeded to Moscow without its enclosure and the other came back to me.

This incident, however, would not in itself prove that *all* letters are opened. But that was not the end of the incident.

Naturally I could not allow the fact of my letter being opened to go without comment, I therefore called the authorised representative of the Soviet Government attached to my person and lodged a complaint. He was very embarrassed and promised whoever was guilty should be severely punished. Evidently wishing to emphasise this for my benefit he telephoned to the chief of the central post office in my presence, explaining what had happened and declaring that he would go straight to the post office to investigate the case himself. No sooner had he replaced the receiver than somebody from his department called for him on some urgent matter of business which required his personal attention. As he was leaving he promised to call for me within two hours in order to take me to the post office to investigate the incident.

I did not feel disposed to wait: so without much thought I went to the post office alone. There I called out the Chief, a Communist, and had barely begun to explain to him the whole story of the letter,

when he interrupted me. To my astonishment the postmaster mistook me for the representative who had telephoned and whom he had been expecting. He began to ask my advice as to how he should proceed in order to put himself right with the representative of the Mission (myself), and without much ado he led me into the "black chamber" to look for the guilty official and give him the necessary whigging for his carelessness.

Realising that I was being offered a tempting opportunity of investigating the organisation of G.P.U. for myself, I wisely refrained from making myself known and followed him.

The "black chambers," I discovered, occupied several large rooms in the right wing of the post office, next door to the poste restante department. About 400 people were working there at a number of tables, and in front of each were instruments for examining letters, a strong light, a mirror, and a steam pipe for unsticking envelopes. The procedure was as follows: having taken an envelope and having exposed it for a few seconds to the action of the steam the censor would open it with remarkable dexterity, take out the letter and hold it first to the light and then to the mirror. If there were nothing to indicate that the letter contained any secret writing the censor would read it and according to the importance of the contents either pass it on to be copied or photographed, or else seal it up again and throw it into a large basket by his side from which the postman would take them for delivery. So much I was able to observe while walking through these rooms.

We passed the general rooms without stopping as the correspondence between foreigners and foreign representatives was examined, it appeared, in a special department particularly carefully. Upon following the Postmaster into this room the first thing I noticed was certain instruments of a peculiar

shape. These instruments, as far as I could judge, were made of hollow needles, some fitted with an optical contrivance and others with a camera. When I enquired their use, the obliging Communist Postmaster explained that they were used for inspecting letters which could not be opened.

I am not aware to what extent the technique in this particular field has developed in western countries during the war, when similar operations were carried out in the interests of national defence, but I must confess that I never expected to see such a truly scientific equipment as was displayed before my eyes in the "black chambers" of G.P.U. While I was examining the apparatus the Postmaster was trying to discover who had examined the letter addressed to the representative of Nansen. It turned out that the culprit was working in another shift and was not present. I then learned that the work is carried on at full pressure all the time, the 24 hours being divided into three shifts; and later, when I had occasion to come past the building of the post office late at night, I noticed that this part of the building was always lit up.

Disappointed that he could not rebuke the official in my presence, the Postmaster led me back to his private room. When he began once more to discuss what was to be done, I could no longer resist the opportunity of revealing my identity, and thanked him for my inspection of the secret departments carried out with his help. The poor fellow was absolutely astounded. Thanking him once more, I told him that in gratitude for his involuntary courtesy I would not press for an investigation which I had already had an opportunity of conducting in person, and which had completely satisfied me. I added that I would send the letter to Moscow again, and hoped it would not be again returned to me. But I did not tell him that it would have been useless for me to start trouble over this incident for the simple reason

that the Mission was on the point of leaving Soviet Russia and that consequently it would not serve any purpose.

I do not know how long it took the Postmaster to recover, but when I was taking leave of him he seemed hardly to have the strength to see me to the door.

When two hours later, as had been arranged, the real representative of the Soviet arrived at my house I told him that I had already settled the incident.

In their search for incriminating evidence every letter is opened by G.P.U., and information obtained in this way helps the authorities to keep a closer watch on suspects. But G.P.U.'s main source of information is an intricate system of spies and *agents-provocateurs*. These *seksots*, as they are called, are the eyes and ears of G.P.U. There are probably millions of them in Russia. Indeed, according to G.P.U.'s own estimate there is one *seksot* to every 13 inhabitants registered in the G.P.U. books.

Every Communist, *komsomoletz* and militiaman, is a *seksot*. Many, too, are recruited among prisoners of the G.P.U. who are forced on pain of death to sign an undertaking to report all suspects to the authorities. But the majority of *seksots* are emigrants who have returned to Russia, particularly military men who are threatened with death or deportation if they refuse to become *agents-provocateurs*. Finally there are the homeless and criminals who by becoming *seksots* secure for themselves freedom from punishment, and a number of workmen and employees in Soviet institutions and factories who have been recruited by threats. In every house, every factory, every trade union and institution in Soviet Russia there is at least one *seksot*, and there are especially many among the employees of beer shops and restaurants, and among cabmen.

The *seksot's* duty is not only to report all that is said and done by ordinary citizens but also to watch the

behaviour of the responsible Communist workers. Everywhere, in each department of every government office in U.S.S.R., there is a *seksot*.

This kind of supervision extends even to the "people's commissaries" (ministers), and to ambassadors who are particularly carefully watched. For example, the former Soviet Ambassador in Rome, Comrade Youreniev, was under the immediate observation of Comrade Katz, the *seksot* of the Embassy.

Thanks to this highly developed system of secret agents and spies, G.P.U. actually receives information about all that is done and spoken in the country. It is only through the *seksots* that G.P.U. is able to discover the plots against the Soviet *régime*. But the direct shadowing by staff spies of the G.P.U. is too inefficient and too clumsily performed to unravel the threads of many conspiracies by itself, particularly in the case of individuals and small groups working against the Communist power. As soon as the G.P.U. becomes suspicious of any person, either by the perusal of his correspondence or by information supplied by a *seksot*, his name is entered on an alphabetical list of suspects and a special dossier is opened for him. In this dossier are systematically collected copies of his correspondence and reports supplied by *seksots* who are deputed to watch him at his residence and at his place of business. If the material thus accumulated confirms the original suspicions, a systematic shadowing by G.P.U. agents is instituted which usually ends in a house search. In the event of results turning out to be positive, the suspected person is imprisoned for interrogation and, of course, is rarely seen again: he is faced with either Solovetzky Island or a shooting party.

I was present at the Loubianka No. 2, the central administration of O.G.P.U., where I was being questioned, when two important tchekists, one my interrogator, Comrade Novitzky, the other Comrade "Fritz," were preparing to conduct an "operation"

(a house-search and arrest). For this purpose they required a detailed alphabetical list from the Secret Operative Department (S.O.C.H.) in order to obtain information about those upon whom they were about to "operate."

The clumsiness of the shadowing conducted by the regular agents of G.P.U. was well illustrated in my own case. The G.P.U. has a dossier in which are filed not only copies of the correspondence of every foreigner resident in Soviet Russia but also notes of conversations overheard, of all his movements in the country, and of the people with whom he is acquainted. As a foreigner, and moreover as a member of several foreign missions, I was singled out for specially close attention.

On one occasion a middle-aged Jewess came to my mission, and, addressing the secretary, expressed the wish to speak personally to the Director of the Mission. Having received my permission, the secretary introduced her into my private room. Here, after having had a good look round, as if to satisfy herself that nobody else was present, she produced the following request: "Mr. Representative, I am the wife of a colonel; my husband has been shot by the Bolsheviks. I am in terrible need: I have been starving for several days. Please give me employment at your Mission." Suspecting with whom I was dealing I replied that unfortunately there was not a vacancy in the Mission, but that if she was really in such an unfortunate position I would give instructions that relief should be given her at once. To this she made the most extraordinary reply: "I would be prepared to work in the Mission without any pay." Being perfectly satisfied by this as to who she was, I said: "I know enough about Russia to know you are lying. How can you, a Jewess, be the wife of a colonel in the Imperial Army? No officer would be permitted to marry a Jewess, and I would suggest that you tell your superiors to send somebody cleverer

than you next time." My visitor rose and, muttering, "What do you take me for—an agent of the G.P.U.? I have been an agent in Tashkent, but not here." She hurried out of my room.

Within a few days of the first visit from G.P.U. another stranger called at the Mission. From my room I heard an unfamiliar voice asking in the office: "Hm! Please tell me, may I know, hm!—what, hm! what is the general purpose of the Nansen Mission?" Without leaving time for a reply I called out to the Mission clerk to bring the visitor into my room. I was at once struck by the appearance of the man who entered. In Soviet Russia, and particularly at that time, everybody was very badly dressed, almost in rags. The young man who entered appeared to be about 30 years of age: he was irreproachably dressed, absolutely spick-and-span from patent leather shoes to a beautiful felt hat. In his hand he carried a gold-mounted cane, which he carelessly twisted about. For a moment I could scarcely believe that I was in Soviet Russia, for had such a smart young man appeared in the street in Soviet land he would surely have been led off to G.P.U. immediately.

If a man even wears gloves in Soviet Russia he is taken for a foreigner, for, if he were a Russian, G.P.U. would at once have enquired the reason for such anti-Communist luxury.

I asked him what I could do for him, and he repeated his former question in a peculiar sing-song voice. Without more ado I advised him to address his question to his superiors, adding that they were perfectly familiar with my activities. The inquisitive young man immediately turned and left without saying a word. I watched him and saw him go straight to the Don G.P.U., which was at that time situated in Friedrich Engels Street, No. 107.

After that nobody called again at the Mission offices on behalf of G.P.U. But a week had not gone by when I noticed some people loafing about before the

windows of my flat. These people carefully scrutinised everyone who entered the house. One Sunday, while resting, for some time I watched a young woman, about 25, who was evidently on duty that day.

I decided to find out if this was my "guard of honour". So I asked a friend, who had come to visit me, to follow me at a distance, and see whether the woman would follow me. Then I went out and walked through several districts of the city, turning every now and then and changing my direction. Then I went home. My colleague returned a few minutes later and told me that the woman had persistently followed me. Looking out of the window, we saw her again, this time sitting on a bench near the house opposite.

My colleague and I decided to have a little joke at her expense. I had a few ham sandwiches prepared, and, crossing the street, I went up to the woman and told her that I was disgusted with the heartlessness of her employers who had left her unrelieved without food for more than six hours, and asked her to accept a few sandwiches from her "ward". A moment later she had disappeared.

These events had an interesting sequel a month later. On the 1st of May, the official holiday of U.S.S.R., all we foreign representatives of the various Missions (Nansen, American "A.R.A.", Italian, and others) received honorary tickets. From a special stand provided for us we watched the march-past of a procession led with red flags. In the middle of the procession were the units of the G.P.U. guard (then called the units for special destinations, "T.C.H.O.N.") and the spies of the G.P.U. led by the Chief of the Don G.P.U., Comrade Siavkin, on horseback. Having led past his units, the chief of the G.P.U. dismounted and ascended the stand. The plenipotentiary representative of the Soviet government attached to the Missions presented him to us. In introducing me to him the official said, "I introduce to you the most terrible

man in Rostov-on-Don." I jokingly replied that for me terrible people did not exist. The head of G.P.U. in evident astonishment glanced sidelong at me and said, "If I am not mistaken you are Mr. Douillet, the authorised representative of the Nansen Mission?" "And you, I believe, are Comrade Siavkin, the head of G.P.U.?" I replied. Comrade Siavkin: "Then you are the man who always discovers my agents?" "Then it is you who send such fools to watch me?" I answered. Then Comrade Siavkin evidently remembered something and laughingly added, "We shan't send any more now. What's the use, when you feed them with ham!"

This dialogue caused a great deal of laughter, and the Polpred, himself a tchekist, laughed as much as any of the members of the foreign Missions who could understand Russian. The rest laughed heartily, too, when we translated it for them.

In conclusion I must point out that it is not from the clumsy staff spies that the G.P.U. obtains its most important information, but from its secret informers among the people.

Now, in a few examples, let us consider what power G.P.U. has in Soviet Russia. Which is stronger, G.P.U. or the Law Courts? G.P.U. or Z.I.K. (the Central Executive Committee of U.S.S.R.)? G.P.U. or the foreign political interests of the Soviet Union? The O.G.P.U. is the most powerful. In the Soviet prisons I met a number of persons who had been acquitted by the Courts on insufficient evidence and had subsequently been arrested by G.P.U., who were not satisfied with the verdict of the Courts.

A certain S——, a native of Petrograd, had been tried in a notorious lawsuit in which many people were involved. The case was heard in the supreme court of Soviet jurisdiction. During the trial it became evident that S—— had really nothing whatever to do with the action and that he had been

arrested owing to mistaken identity. He was acquitted by the Supreme Court of U.S.S.R. As soon as G.P.U. heard of this they immediately rearrested S—— on the same charge, and condemned him to 3 years in the Solovetzky camp. In spite of the numerous petitions addressed to the Supreme Court by S—— himself and by his relatives it was unable to do anything at all to uphold its own resolution. The Supreme Court—as usual—proved to be powerless in the face of G.P.U.

Here is another case which concerned me personally. When I heard that my son had been arrested in Moscow at the instigation of O.G.P.U., I immediately left for the Red capital to discover the reason. I first visited the People's Commission of Justice (Narkoyoust), the procurator of the Republic. In reply to the petition I presented, the Procurator, Jakovlev (assistant of Comrade Kataniana, the so-called "Procurator in the matters of O.G.P.U.") said, "Having investigated the affair of your son we find that he is not guilty of anything; but it is *utterly impossible for us* to do anything to free him. In answer to my further question, "For what purpose, then does the Commission of Justice exist in Soviet Russia?" I received a very decisive retort, "We shall be forced to arrest you also if you ask such questions."

These two instances are sufficient to show how helpless this parody of justice is when it has to face O.G.P.U.

The Z.I.K. itself (Central Executive Committee), which in accordance with the Soviet constitution is the supreme governing body of the country, is just as helpless.

In the Boutirky O.G.P.U. prison, at the same time as myself, there was a certain U——, an old mountaineer from the Caucasus, from the Caratchaevo-Tcherkess autonomous region. U——, a prominent worker, was arrested when the Soviets occupied the

Caucasus. In 1925 the Z.I.K. of U.S.S.R. declared a partial amnesty affecting only certain regions of the Caucasus. The Caratchaevo-Tcherkess region came within the scope of the amnesty, and U——, together with many other prisoners, was liberated. But a fortnight later, he was summoned to Moscow, where G.P.U. again arrested him. All the petitions addressed by his relatives to Z.I.K. led to nothing. The Z.I.K., who had declared the amnesty, was powerless to force the G.P.U. to respect it. U—— was condemned by the O.G.P.U. to five years' banishment to Solovetzky Island.

A much more general instance of the superior power of G.P.U. concerns certain returning political emigrants who had been pardoned by the V.Z.I.K. and allowed to return to Soviet Russia. While the Nansen Mission was working in Soviet Russia Professor Nansen undertook to facilitate such repatriation from countries which had not acknowledged the Soviets. In such countries, where there were no Soviet Embassies, the representatives of Nansen received for transmission to V.Z.I.K. petitions from persons wishing to return. Out of the number of petitions which reached V.Z.I.K. with a request for a pardon some were granted and the petitioners were forgiven and allowed to return to their native country. Nansen's representative in Bulgaria—the heaviest repatriation took place from that country—on receipt of a number of pardons formed parties of returning emigrants. When a sufficient number had been collected, a steamer was chartered to carry them to Novorossisk. Lists of those returning by a particular boat were sent in advance to Novorossisk, where another of Nansen's representatives was to meet them. In spite of the fact that Novorossisk was in the South Eastern District of Soviet Russia, and therefore under the control of my branch of the Mission, I flatly refused to take part in such receptions, knowing only too well the duplicity of the Soviet

Government. I requested the central administration of the Mission to send a special representative for this purpose, as otherwise I should be compelled to resign.

My request was granted, and a special representative was sent for the reception of returning emigrants. He was Mr. Simonett, whom I have already had occasion to mention. When a transport arrived Mr. Simonett checked the Mission list and ascertained that all the returning emigrants had arrived. They were then asked whether they had any complaints against the Nansen Mission in respect of possible misunderstandings with the steamer authorities or anything else. If there were no complaints the representative of the local Soviet authorities signed a protocol to that effect.

This ended the responsibility of the Nansen Mission, and the unfortunate emigrants, who had confided in the Soviet Powers, found themselves in their power. They were put into special encampments, where their troubles began. First of all those who had been pardoned could not obtain their liberty until they had received Soviet documents giving them a right of residence. These documents were issued by G.P.U. In this camp the returned emigrants were mercilessly robbed by their guards. Those who had but recently left the steamer decently dressed were now clothed in what rags had been left them in exchange for their stolen garments. After a time some G.P.U. officials arrived with a list of some of these returned emigrants who were led away under a pretence of interrogation. When they had been taken out of sight of the others, they were shot without the least regard for the V.Z.I.K. pardon. G.P.U. had their own lists, quite apart from those of the V.Z.I.K., and the names of those returned emigrants whom, despite their promise not to oppose the Soviet Power, G.P.U. considered to be dangerous if left alive, were checked off on these lists. Later, more officials from G.P.U.

came to the camp and distributed passports which, as was stated in them, were only valid in the place of residence and which had to be visa'd on arrival at the local G.P.U., after which the returned emigrants would be liberated. Some of those liberated figured in a special list, and, having granted them permission to move about freely, G.P.U. watched where they went and with whom they associated. Having discovered who were their friends, G.P.U. arrested both them and their friends. After endless interrogations some were shot and others banished to Solovetzky Island or to Siberia. Those who did not figure in the special lists arrived in their native town or village and proceeded to the local G.P.U. for registration. There they received passports marked "former white." They had to sign an undertaking to attend daily at G.P.U. for registration. The "former whites" were forbidden to go beyond the bounds of their settlement. After a certain period the returned emigrants were allowed to come up for registration twice a week only, later once a week, and finally only twice a month. After that they were allowed to leave the district of jurisdiction of the local G.P.U. for short periods, but in every instance special permission had to be obtained.

In this way many were left in peace for quite a long time, and all of them were allowed to write to their friends abroad informing them that they were alive and well and that all their troubles were over. Thus such of their friends who were still resident abroad were persuaded that it was safe to return to Russia, and some of them did return. When G.P.U. saw from the correspondence of the already-returned emigrant that he could no longer serve them as a decoy for his friends, he was unexpectedly summoned to G.P.U. and was there invited to become a *seksot*. Those who refused were sentenced to several years confinement at a concentration camp on Solovetzky Island or Souzdal.

In April, 1926, I was confined in a notorious G.P.U. prison in Petrograd (Shpalernaia No. 2) with a certain P. P——, a former private in General Youdenitch's army, who had returned early in 1923. After more than three years of comparatively quiet residence in his village (Pskov Government) he was summoned to the Petrograd G.P.U. and there told in the most cynical manner that the last of his friends with whom he had kept up correspondence had arrived on Soviet territory. "Your part is therefore finished. Now sign this paper," he was told. This paper was an undertaking to become a secret agent of G.P.U. For refusing to sign it P—— was imprisoned at No. 2 Shpalernaia, and three days after our conversation, in my presence, he received notification that he had been condemned to five years' concentration camp. I, who have seen for myself what G.P.U. did with the repatriated and "pardoned" people, declare without fear of being challenged that the pardon received from V.Z.I.K. is *utterly worthless*. G.P.U. makes use of the promises of V.Z.I.K. to lure their victims to destruction if they are resident outside the limits of U.S.S.R.

If this book should chance to fall into the hands of a Russian emigrant who contemplates returning to his native country while it is still under the power of O.G.P.U., let him heed the warning of the author, who has suffered much in Soviet Russia merely at the sight of what was done with the unfortunate emigrants who had believed and returned. The central administration of the Nansen Mission was frequently inundated with correspondence from relatives imploring them to intercede on behalf of repatriated persons who had been arrested by G.P.U., and I have often been to the Supreme Authority of G.P.U. for the South East region to intercede for them. My applications never had any result. Whenever I asked them why someone had been arrested after having been pardoned by V.Z.I.K., G.P.U. gave

the following reply: "The persons in question have been arrested for political reasons; and as the Nansen Mission has promised by its agreement that it will not interfere with internal political affairs of the Soviet Republic we are unable to give you the information you require." It is clear that the V.Z.I.K. is powerless.

During the latter part of my stay in Soviet Russia I had to visit the French Embassy in Moscow on a matter of business. The business was this: my son, who had not long before arrived from Belgium, met with a number of obstacles to his free residence in Soviet Russia. As, on account of the liquidation of the Nansen Mission, I was unable to address myself directly to the People's Commission for Foreign Affairs (N.K.I.D.), I went to the French Embassy and asked them to intercede for my son.

The first Secretary of the Embassy, M. Chartier, who received me in the absence of the Ambassador, M. Erbette, promised to communicate to him my request and asked me to call the next day to hear the result. When I saw M. Chartier he told me that M. Erbette had already taken the necessary steps at the N.K.I.D., and that the latter had promised to remove all obstacles. He added that Comrade Litvinov (deputy for the Commissary for Foreign Affairs), had referred this matter to the head of the sub-department for Roman-English affairs, Comrade Kohan who would expect me that day. M. Chartier advised me not to lose any time but to go and see him at once. The assistant, dealing with French and Belgian affairs, Comrade Roslavetz (Comrade Kohan was at a meeting of People's commissaries), after I had explained to her the facts of the case, requested me to call upon her in a few days' time, when she would be able to let me know the result. When I called a few days later I was received by Comrade Kohan, who said that unfortunately he could do nothing as the case was being dealt with

by O.G.P.U. When I said that I would have to see M. Erbette again, he replied, "If M. Erbette interferes again in this matter *we shall know how to put him in his proper place!*" Once more O.G.P.U. was proved the superior power.

In U.S.S.R. the power of O.G.P.U. is supreme and unchallenged. Its staff is mainly recruited from cocaine-maniacs, sadists, sexual perverts, and criminals, persons who, on account of over-indulgence in their particular vices, have lost all semblance of human beings. To these people the Politbureau has given unlimited power, solely for the sake of preserving the Communist rule in Russia.

## CHAPTER XI

### MY EXPERIENCES IN THE DUNGEONS OF O.G.P.U.

As a climax to what I saw in Soviet Russia, I was fortunate enough, during my last months there, to see what takes place within the strong walls of the O.G.P.U. prisons, which are impenetrable to a free man. I had occasion to study closely what goes on in these prisons, and personally to meet thousands of the victims of Soviet Power who are languishing there.

During my seven months' imprisonment I had sufficient time to complete my investigations of the terror which keeps the Communists in power in U.S.S.R.

When I was arrested I was lodged at Loubianka No. 2, the interior prison which is in the central administration of O.G.P.U. From there I was transferred to Loubianka No. 14, a similar interior prison, and thence to the Boutirky O.G.P.U. prison. Boutirky was the last of the prisons through which I passed in Moscow. After that I found myself in Petrograd (now Leningrad), Shpalernaia No. 2, in the famous D.P.Z., the house of preliminary detention of O.G.P.U. From D.P.Z. I was sent to the local prison of the city of Pskov, which bears the absolutely inappropriate title of "Work and Correction House." After spending some time in the Pskov prison, I was transferred to a similar "house" in Ostrov and thence to the frontier command of G.P.U. Then, I must admit without regret, I found myself at liberty, not merely the relative liberty

which at best is all one enjoys in Soviet Russia, but really free, beyond its frontiers, in Latvia.

In this chapter I shall describe in chronological order my experiences and observations of the prisons through which I passed.

My acquaintance with prison *régime* began in the Command of O.G.P.U., where in the nicest possible manner the Commandant on duty invited me to undress. Naked, while your belongings are being subjected to a most rigorous examination, you inform the Commandant about yourself and about your nearest relatives, dead and alive, for the purpose of filling up a question sheet. While reciting your pedigree you are watching one of the assistants feeling through your clothes, sometimes undoing the seams and at the same time helping himself to the contents of your pockets, while another is trying to tear off the soles of your boots in the hope of finding documents hidden beneath them.

But at last you are dressed again and the questionnaire is filled in. Before the Commandant on the table there is a pile of things which have been found in your possession; sorting these out, he enters some in a list of articles which are signed for as having been taken away from you; passports, photographs and other documents are not entered on the list, and any request for them to be included is bluntly refused. As a matter of fact, if later on you regain your freedom, these articles are not returned to you. Among other documents, O.G.P.U. took from me my mandate as member of the Nansen Mission.

At last all these preliminaries were over, and from the Commandant's office I was taken to a room near by, which bears the characteristic name of "dogs' hole." Once inside the "dogs' hole" I could immediately appreciate its name.

In a small room there were bunks along the wall leaving a passage less than one metre wide. On the

bunks, intended for not more than ten, about thirty people were crouching. Those unable to find room on the bunks squeezed into the passage. It really put me in mind of a cart in which stray dogs from the streets have been collected. These human beings had been caught in the streets in just such a manner and crammed together in this narrow room. The "dogs' hole" contained besides the newly-arrested persons those who had been brought from Boutirky for interrogation. While I was there one man came back from an interrogation. With a lost and wandering look, hardly able to restrain his tears, he returned to the "dogs' hole" and squatted on the floor not far from me. His face was bruised and blackened, and a few minutes later he swayed and fainted. Somehow we cleared a space in one of the bunks and laid him down. This unfortunate man, who two hours before had gone out in the best of health to be questioned, came back in a terrible state, his face disfigured with blows and his body all marked with the strokes of wet towels. When he came round he bit his lips and refused to admit that he had been beaten, although this was apparent to all. The poor man was afraid to admit it; but a few months later I met him at Boutirky, and then he told me all about the beating he had received and the reason for his silence at the time: he had been warned that if he made the least allusion to the treatment he had received to his fellow prisoners he would immediately be shot.

After a few months in prison I no longer felt any surprise at such occurrences, but at the time, I must confess, it impressed me terribly. Afterwards I came to know many such beaten and ill-treated prisoners.

On the first floor of O.G.P.U., where is the so-called "Bandotdel" the screams never stop; this is where people are tortured. But let us return to the "dogs' hole," where I remained until late in the evening.

At about 8 p.m. those brought for interrogation were fetched to be taken back to Boutirky. The "dogs' hole" became less overcrowded: there were only about 15 of us left, and I was just about to get some sleep when the door opened and the Commandant appeared with a list in his hands. Eight people were called out ; I was one of them. I enquired where I was being taken. The reply was, "You will see for yourself soon." I did not have to wait long; after a roll-call we were surrounded by tchekists armed with revolvers, who led us into the courtyard of the building. Here I noticed that all the windows on one side of the court, the side of the Malaia Loubianka, were barred with iron sheets. This was the notorious interior prison, from one of the windows of which, according to the Soviet Press, Boris Savinkov threw himself. I now realized the absurdity of this statement of the Soviets. How could Savinkov have thrown himself out of a window into which a grill was built and which was furthermore protected by an iron shield which only allowed the light to penetrate from above? Obviously Savinkov's "suicide" was another lie of the Soviets. It is equally obvious, and I have pretty reliable information, that the mysterious, sudden death of one of the Presidents of Z.I.K. of U.S.S.R., Comrade Nariman Narimanov, a former friend of Savinkov, was in some way connected with this murder.

But before me there was something which excited my interest more than the windows of the interior prison; this was a black motor van, closed in on all sides. It was the "Black Raven," as it is called in U.S.S.R., where a man, catching sight of it in the street, feels his heart turn to ice. The "Black Ravens"—there are several of them—are used for the transportation of prisoners of G.P.U. to and from the prisons.

We were pushed into it: the inner grills closed with a click: the sentry took his seat behind us,

and rattling wildly the "Black Raven" moved off. Whither? One had to be prepared for everything. After a few minutes the van stopped. Again the grills clicked: the sentry got out, and we were led into a yard. Once more we found ourselves at a Commandant's office: once more we had to undress, and after another search we were led to the cells.

In the cell into which I was pushed there were already 18 prisoners, and the cell had only 14 bunks: three other prisoners and myself, who had been the last to arrive, had to sleep on the floor. In the cell I was told that we were at Loubianka No. 14: where formerly there had been a secondary school there was now a Bolshevik prison. I remained there long enough to be able to observe what went on, and it was there that I saw for the first time how the victims are taken away to be shot.

The terror of this prison is the stillness that reigns there and the total ignorance of its inmates of what may happen from one moment to another. Talking is forbidden in the cells, and the prisoners can only converse in a whisper. Every 5 or 10 minutes the spy-hole is opened and the tchekist on duty looks in to see what is going on inside. If he happens to catch the sound of a conversation his stern call, "Silence! or I shoot!" rings out. When you are called out from the cell for interrogation or measurement the tchekist calls to you in a whisper so that it may not be heard in the adjoining cells. You are not told where you are going: you are only told that you have got to come "with your belongings" or "without." In the corridor the tchekist warns you to walk on tip-toe and be silent. "In case of insubordination I shall shoot!" he tells you. If, while you are being led down a corridor, a bell is heard, the signal that somebody else is being led out, you are immediately placed with your face to the wall in order that you may not see who is passing, and you are warned again "Don't move or I shall

shoot!" This happened when I was being taken to have my finger-prints recorded. You are kept in ignorance of what goes on to such an extent that when you are passing by a clock in the corridor, it is covered up so that you shall not know the time.

In the daytime the inmates of the cells try to sleep, in preparation for the night, as it is only at night that life begins in this prison. For the purpose of adding to the terror all interrogations and summonses take place at night. At night, when all are obliged to lie down in their places on pain of death, each prisoner feverishly strains his ears for any sound. You hear the doors in other cells being almost noiselessly opened . . . whispers . . . the sound of stealthy steps along the corridor . . . then the lock clicks and the door of your own cell opens . . . the Commandant calls out names from a list. Everybody's heart sinks. Who is to be next? The persons called out are ordered to come "with belongings"; they are lucky: it is almost certain that they are being transferred to the Boutirky prison: at least they are safe for this night! Later some are called out "without belongings"; it is difficult to guess the fate of these: the majority go to be questioned and then come back: some go to be shot. A few hours later the Commandant comes in and asks: Where are their belongings? Everybody knows whose belongings he means—those who went out and failed to return. They are pointed out to him, and he takes part and leaves the rest in the cell; with a cynical laugh he says, "You may make use of them for the time being. They won't want them any more." From time to time the abysmal silence is broken by the screams of women, "Scoundrels! . . . violators! . . . murderers! . . . Oh . . . ah . . . ah!"—What is happening to them? One cannot tell: one can only surmise.

Here, in the cell, I have learned how people are being tortured by shooting exhibitions and how these

are actually carried out. I have met many people who have been through what is called "torture by the shootings"; most of them have later been shot themselves.

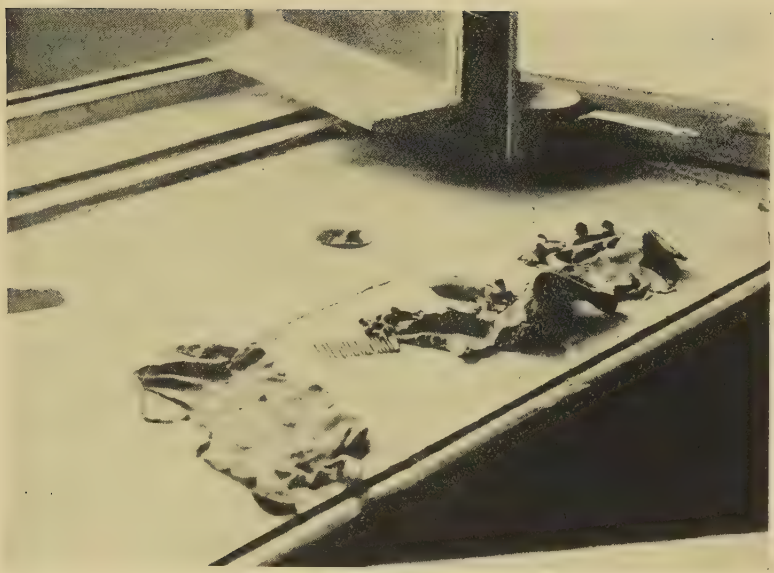
In my cell there was a Georgian. He had been an active leader of the anti-Soviet rising in Georgia in 1924. The rising was suppressed in torrents of blood by the G.P.U., aided by Turkish troops.

He was lucky enough to escape and succeeded in hiding until the end of 1925, when he was apprehended in Kiev. The tchekists were endeavouring by means of tortures to obtain from him the names of certain leaders of the rebellion whom G.P.U. had been unable to discover. After having questioned and tortured him without obtaining the desired result, he was at length subdued by being made to witness the shootings. He was stripped naked and taken to the basement. This is his description of what he saw there: "In the basement I was pushed into a dark corridor, at the end of which there were a few steps leading down. Beyond there was a large cellar, the floor of which, about two feet from the steps, consisted of a grill. There was a corpse with a bullet wound in the back of the head, lying face downwards on the grill. The blood was flowing in little rivulets down the neck and dripping through the grating. After I had been shown this sight I was told that I would be given another 24 hours in which to 'consider.' The following night H—— was called out again and when leaving he bade us a last farewell with a face distorted by fear. But at daybreak he came back, shaven, perfumed, and with his pockets full of cigarettes. Having shared them with his cell-mates, he joined our little group of seven political prisoners, who always kept away from the criminals—G.P.U. puts them all together—and told us what he had been through and then took leave of us. When H—— refused to betray his accomplices a bell was rung for an escort and he was again taken to the

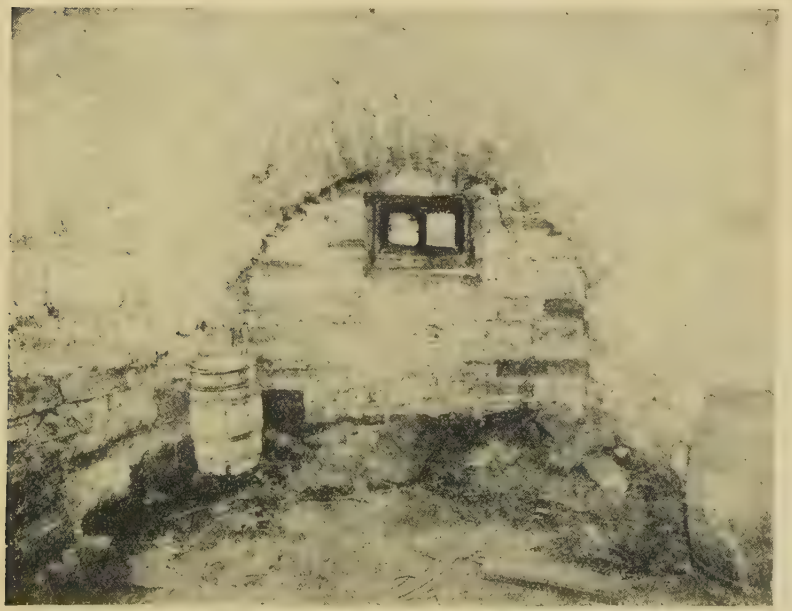
same cellar. He was handcuffed and fastened to one of the side walls in such a manner that he could see the little corridor by which he had entered.

A night of terror then began for him. First of all one of the tchekists took up his position with levelled revolver in a little niche about a yard from the end of the corridor, and near the entrance to the cellar in which H—— was chained. The light of the corridor was extinguished and the tchekist disappeared from sight. At the same time a strong light flooded the cellar. There was silence for a moment. Then he heard a noise at the far end of the corridor and knew that somebody was "being led" towards the cellar. But when the victim, an old man with a white flowing beard, reached the steps, staring in terror at the grating and at H—— chained to the wall, a sharp report rang out and the old man fell forward on the grating. The shot had blown away the back of his skull and the blood was pouring out. The tchekist stepped from his hiding-place, had a look, and, satisfied with the result, winked mockingly at H——, and then disappeared again. Again H—— heard steps in the corridor: someone else was being brought along, this time a woman, almost a child, and the same ghastly scene was repeated. H—— remembered only that he counted 17 shootings: then he lost consciousness: when he came to, he found himself in the office of his questioner just before daybreak, still handcuffed and still undressed.

When the man noticed that he had come to, he approached him and said, "Now, you have seen what awaits you, you will have your last toilet, and while the hairdresser is busy you will still have time to think it over." H—— was then dressed, shaved, and perfumed, and asked: "Have you thought it over?" "No," he replied. He admitted to us that at the time he did not know what he was saying, but he realised what was awaiting him: the sights he had seen during the night were still confusing



Pieces of human skin torn from the hands of victims of the O.G.P.U. by means of a metal comb after they had been plunged in boiling oil.



A cellar in Jdanov's house at Kieff, now used as a place of execution by the O.G.P.U.

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his brain. "Well, then," he was told, "I shall give you another four hours to think it over. During that time, although it is so short, you may think better of it. So long!"

H—— was brought back to the cell early in the morning. His remarks were incoherent, and as the minutes passed his face became more and more painful to look at. At last he realised that he had no more strength left to endure it, and he began to doubt whether he would be able to stand his final interview with his interlocutor. Shortly afterwards he was called out: he could not move: his legs gave way beneath him. The escort carried him away, and I never saw him again.

But a few months later, in February, 1926, when I was in the Boutirky prison of O.G.P.U., in the working wing, working in the central library, I found his name in the papers to which I had access there. In the "Government Communications" issued by O.G.P.U. regarding the measures taken against the last of the leaders of the Georgian rebellion, these were mentioned as betrayed by H——. Evidently he was not strong enough, as he himself had feared.

During my confinement in this cell about 50 people or more passed through it. More than a third of them were shot.

I remained about 10 days at Loubianka No. 14. In the early part of the evening of my last day there I was called out to be photographed. In order to get to the photographer's room, which was in a different building, it was necessary to go through the yard and past the Commandant's office. As I passed it I shuddered in spite of myself and stopped for a moment. I heard a heartrending groan and through the opening of the door I saw the one-eyed Commandant of the prison, who is also one of the bloodthirsty executioners of G.P.U. The Commandant stood over a man who lay on the floor surrounded by several tchekists. I could scarcely see

the prostrate man, but one of his arms was visible between the tchekists who surrounded him. On his sleeve there was a blue, white, and red band. At first I thought of the national colours of former Russia, but no! these were not the Russian national colours. Suddenly I was struck on the back with the butt of a rifle and roughly ordered by one of the escort, "Move yourself or I shall shoot." I had not moved a pace when I again heard, not a groan this time—but a yell, and then a shout in French, "Oh, les assassins! . . . Bourreaux! . . . Band . . .": the scream was stifled before the word was finished.

When I had been photographed and was being led back to the cell, 10 minutes later, the Commandant's door was closed and a deathly silence reigned in the prison. I was never able to discover who the unfortunate man was. All I can say is that it happened at Loubianka 14 between the 10th and the 14th of October, 1925. I cannot give the exact date, as in this prison we had the greatest difficulty in keeping any count of time.

The same night, before dawn, I was called out "with belongings" and was taken together with about 40 other prisoners in the "Black Raven" to the Boutirky Prison.

I remained there for about six months or more and had an opportunity of studying it closely, having at one time or another passed through almost all its corridors. I shall give a description of such parts of this prison as are shown to foreign visitors and delegations and also of such as are utterly inaccessible to the stranger, where the most horrible nightmares are enacted.

The Commandant, Adamson, was a typical Commandant of an O.G.P.U. prison. He had been a door-porter in a hotel in Riga; in April, 1925, during the hunger strike in Boutirky he strangled with his own hands some of the prisoners in full view of the others.

The wings that contain the prisoners under interrogation are inaccessible to visitors. There are single cells which contain 25 prisoners and double ones which accommodate 50. In each cell by the door, in the place of honour, is "Parasha" (an abbreviation of the Russian name Prascovia), an iron tank with a lid, which takes the place of a lavatory, to which the inmates are only allowed access three times a day and then only *en bloc* for five minutes at a time. On both sides of the cell, in the place of the former bunks, are boards forming shelves. Only in a very few of the cells do these bunks still exist. The diet consists of two kettles of hot water morning, noon, and night, a slice of bread in the morning, at dinner time a kind of soup made from rotten cabbage and a quantity of bullocks' eyes floating in it, called "skull borshtch," and in the evening a little porridge. The food is brought in a common dish, two tureens per cell. The prison provides no spoons to eat this stuff with, nor mugs for drinking the hot water. The prisoners drink and eat in any way they can. Those who have relatives in Moscow sometimes receive a spoon and a mug from them, and till then one is left to lap the stuff up from the common dish, and that when the cell is shared with sick people and persons suffering from venereal diseases, whom the authorities refuse to put in the hospital. The position is most difficult; in order to avoid infection I myself went hungry for 12 days until I got a parcel from home.

The cells are unspeakably dirty: the walls, which were once white, are now so soiled that they are brown; fleas, bugs, and lice literally devoured us, and we spent the day in catching them on our persons and on our linen. A few days after you have arrived there are hundreds of them: however much you may wage war on them they do not seem to decrease. Fresh consignments seem to arrive from somewhere. So many insects have been squashed on them that the bunks are the colour of dried blood. Once a month

the hospital attendants come to disinfect "Parasha" (the lavatory bin); they casually smear it with some carbolic preparation, and that it is all, and yet during a whole month it is being used daily by all, not excepting those ill with venereal diseases. But then how can you expect the hospital to care for your health, when on the contrary, in particularly ticklish cases, especially when it is a foreigner who cannot be shot without a great fuss, it serves as a convenient means of getting rid of them. During the time I was there many foreigners, dangerous to the Soviets, who were waiting to be exchanged by their governments for Communists, and whom O.G.P.U. was afraid to let go as they knew too much, were poisoned in the hospital.

For instance, of the last batch of Latvian subjects exchanged in 1927, two on the list were missing, as they had died in hospital from "heart failure." One of them I had known well; we had struck up a friendship during the time we had been imprisoned together, and I was impatiently awaiting his release. Instead, I received a letter from another exchanged prisoner, a mutual friend of ours, which read: ". . . but Peremykin died in the prison hospital. I am afraid that he must have known too much about something. His death is most mysterious as he died in the hospital after having eaten some 'tinned fish'—but, officially, from heart failure. You remember what a healthy man he was? But then you know very well yourself how 'fashionable' deaths from 'heart failure' are at Boutirky."

During the time I was at Boutirky I noted among my personal acquaintances alone eleven cases of death from "heart failure," in every instance after they had partaken of "tinned fish." And how many people must have died of this "heart failure" that I knew nothing about? It is difficult to form an opinion, but those who have been in the hospital and returned from there alive state that hardly a day

goes by without cases of sudden death among the patients. In this prison, even when one feels very ill, one does not go to the doctor; one is afraid of meeting the executioner.

Every 10 to 15 minutes the corridor attendant peeps into the cell through the "voltchok" or peep-hole in the door to see what is taking place within. This goes on all day and all night, for throughout the night the electricity is kept burning in the cells. It is difficult to get used to sleeping with such a strong light at first, but one gets used to anything in time.

In one of the cells where I happened to be the electric bulb burned out one night when we were all asleep. We were awakened by the stern order, "Do not move; anyone who moves will be shot!" In the opening of the door, by the light from the corridor, we saw about 20 tchekists with rifles ready. All of them came in and one replaced the bulb. The tchekist on duty in the corridor threatened to put the foreman of our cell into the penal cell because our light had gone out, as if we were to blame for it.

The penal cells are still more terrible. In them are concentrated the most reckless criminals, who are encouraged to insult and mock those who are put there as a punishment. One prisoner, called Rassin, by mistake was put in one of these cells in place of another, named Raskin, and was only released after several hours when the mistake was discovered. During those few hours he had been beaten several times. Hardly had he entered the cell when the scum sitting there in rags and almost naked, the lowest of the low criminal class, started to play cards for his overcoat and trousers, etc. What took place in these penal cells was an indescribable nightmare.

But there are still worse forms of punishment, and these are the "kartzers" (dungeons). What they are like I have been able to judge from a description

by a friend of mine, a certain M——, who spent a day and a half in one of them. It was a stone "box," with a floor space 1 metre by 1½ and no window. Near the door was the "Parasha," and there was water reaching up to the knees. M—— was confined in one of these "kartzers" in January; the cold was intense and in order that the "patient" might survive he was made to drink hot water all the time. The kettle containing the hot water was stood on the "Parasha."

On admittance to the "kartzer" your boots and clothes are taken off and you are left in your underclothes. The only salvation would seem to be to sit on the "Parasha," but this is not allowed, and you are driven off at the point of the revolver. When your legs get too tired to enable you to stand, you sit down in the icy water. The water covers nearly the whole of the body, only the shoulders and head remaining above it. No food is supplied. What effect such a treatment has, I have been able to judge from M——'s case. After undergoing this torture he contracted pneumonia which changed to galloping consumption and he was dead within two weeks.

The prisoners who are put into these dungeons may be divided into two main sections. The first section comprises all those people whom the Soviets habitually persecute. These include clergy, members of parish councils, peasants unable to pay their taxes or arrested in the course of peasant risings, which are frequent in U.S.S.R., workmen who dared to go on strike or who G.P.U. learned formerly shared in the opinions of the social democrats, and people suspected of being counter-revolutionaries or who had the misfortune to speak to a foreigner. Finally, about 30 per cent are foreigners who are arrested for the purpose of exchanging them for Communists who have been imprisoned for crimes committed abroad. Among these foreigners practically all nationalities are represented, but there is an especially large number of

Poles, Letts, Chinese, Esthonians, and Hungarians. One day during my imprisonment several hundred Hungarians were brought in, former prisoners of war, who were to be held as hostages during the trial of the notorious Communist leader Rakotzi in Hungary.

Amongst the foreign prisoners there are some dozens of unsuspecting foreign Communists who found their way into U.S.S.R., the Communist paradise! They are detained for having noticed the truth about what is going on in Soviet Russia and for having dared to say so. With them are confined quite a number of agents of the U.S.S.R. Embassies and Trade Delegations abroad; these are imprisoned for having known too much: they could not be allowed to roam at large in the Soviet union. Among them I met an agent of the Riga Trade Delegation, Henkin, another of the delegation in Rome, D. Segal, and several others. In the Boutirky prison alone there are scores of them.

The second section is composed of persons who have been arrested in accordance with the so-called "seasonal programmes." These are carried out upon instructions received from the Politbureau, and they embrace all classes of the population, according to their trades or professions. To-day the paper-workers are arrested: to-morrow it may be the metal-workers: then perhaps the co-operators: then those employed in the soft-goods trade, and so on. Once or twice a month people in different spheres of activity are arrested. These arrests are carried out in accordance with plans that are prepared and worked out by O.G.P.U. and the Politbureau nearly a year beforehand *in order that none of the population of Soviet-land shall forget the power of the Politbureau and the G.P.U.*

It is not for nothing that a proverb has sprung up in Soviet Russia: "He who has not been to prison is not a Soviet citizen!"

A certain important Communist worker, speaking

of the appalling number of questionaires which the people in Soviet Russia have to fill up, said, "in your questionaires with their innumerable questions there is just one missing. After the question, "*Have you been under arrest or in prison?* there should be another one: *And if not, why not?*" And indeed, there are probably few people in Soviet Russia who have not been to prison under the "seasonal programme" rule. If there are some who have not yet had a taste of prison, they may be comforted their turn will come!

Among those I met in the prisons many had already been under investigation for 1 to 3 years. The minimum period for investigation is considered to be six months. Quite a number of the victims have never been before an enquiry commission and do not know why they have been arrested. Many, as a result of such ignorance and in despair at the many months and perhaps years of imprisonment, resolve to resort to the extreme step of a hunger-strike. In every corridor there are several prisoners during the week who take this step. On the average there are about 100 cases of this sort in every prison and at any time. The administration of the prison does not take any notice of such "hunger-strikers," there are so many of them!

The enquiring officer is informed, but he hardly ever bothers about it. The usual reply is a sentence; those who dare to "hunger-strike" usually receive two or three times the sentence that is passed upon the other prisoners *in the same case* who do not "hunger-strike." If the latter receives a sentence of 3 years "Solovetzky," the former will not get less than 10.

In my cell there was a Georgian who fasted for 23 days and received 10 years; another, a Sart, 19 days with the same result, ten years' Solovetzky Island. I could mention hundreds of similar cases which I have witnessed myself. At times a hunger-striker is called

out for enquiry and returns terribly beaten and wounded. As a rule more than half of the prisoners under enquiry return in such a state that they have barely enough strength to creep to their places on the shelf, there to recover more or less until the next enquiry. In prison this is the commonest occurrence. In fact enquiries without any "under-scratches" (prison term) are extremely rare.

A cell is a terrible sight with all its filth, its cruel *régime*, and its prisoners "recovering" from enquiries. But even worse are the sights on days when the sentences are being brought to the various corridors. They are brought in the evening, and these evenings are evenings of terror. But in order to grasp the meaning of these "deliveries" one must know what the O.G.P.U. "trials" are like. After your enquiry is finished and you have been faced with the accusation, you spend several more months in prison awaiting the sentence. The "trial" takes place in your absence. In the College of the O.G.P.U. the enquiring official marks your case with a certain resolution and this is the *de facto* sentence. But it has to be officially confirmed by the so-called "Special Conference of the O.G.P.U. College."

At what speed this sentencing is accomplished may be judged from the fact that on December 11th, 1925, when my son and I received our sentence, it was numbered as the 125th for that day. Each case deals with several people, usually with dozens of people. I have sometimes seen my fellow-prisoners receive sentences numbered for that day as high as 350. Therefore, taking it that one case concerns say five or six persons (a low average), there must be about 2,000 persons sentenced during the 2 to 3 hours that the College sits every day! Naturally, the business of the College is carried on by a simplified process. The cases submitted by the commission of enquiry are dealt with *en bloc*. Extracts from the sentences are typed on small pieces

of paper for each individual prisoner; they are called "extracts from the minutes of the session." Here is a specimen of such a paper which decides the fate of a man; it is a copy of the extract referring to my own case. Like others, I was only allowed to read it, but taking advantage of the inattention of the tchekist who brought it I managed to take a copy.

| Special Conference of the College of O.G.P.U. | Extract from minutes, 11th December, 1925. |
|---|---|
| 125 Heard: | Resolved: |
| Case No. 34311 accusing Douillet, Joseph, under section 66, U.K. | To be expelled from U.S.S.R. territory under escort. |

Seal of the special conference of the college of O.G.P.U.

Such extracts are sent to the prison twice a week, as the College of O.G.P.U. sits twice a week, on Wednesdays and Fridays. In the prisons the tchekists on duty deliver them in the different corridors. From your cell you hear a door closed at the end of the corridor. Then comes the voice of the tchekist on duty: somebody is being summoned from one of the other cells. A moment later there is a smothered cry, and a door shuts with a bang. Then they are at your cell: everyone turns pale. The one they want goes out: he is given a paper: "Read it, quickly!"—"Have you read it? Then sign!" and he is pushed back into the cell. There everybody is waiting anxiously. "How much?" they enquire. "Ten" (years' Solovetzky) is the answer, and everyone shudders. Each is afraid, and thinks to himself, "If only I can miss this session! It seems to be a 'terrible' one, all tens and shootings." Again they call out at one cell after another and then again at yours. Some of the victims faint away, others beat their heads against the wall. You hear cries: "My

children! my poor children! . . . Oh, God! . . . what for?" Somebody is crying. The others who have not yet been sentenced stand by the door and listen, very pale. "Whose turn is next? Perhaps it is mine?" each is thinking. Again they call them out and there are more cries. Then things begin to quieten down. They have finished. The outside door bangs. Thank God! it is over for to-day. In the cells they start reckoning up: we have 2 with ten years, 2 with five years, and 1 with three years: next door there are as many more with equally severe sentences. Everybody thinks to himself, "Soon I shall receive mine. How much will it be?"

These moments cannot be described: to understand them one must have lived through them. Human beings are herded together here like sheep for the slaughterhouse—the only difference is that the sheep do not know what they are there for, whereas these men know what to expect: they are waiting to be killed, and there is terror in this waiting.

Terror infests the whole atmosphere of the prison, this dungeon of the Tcheka. Terrible are the nights that follow the summonses. You see those who have just received their sentences, and you know what is passing in their minds. They cannot sleep, but then nobody in the whole cell sleeps. Everybody feels that over him also hangs the same sword of Damocles.

Still more terrible are the Tuesday nights when the victims are led away "without belongings." Everybody knows that these have but a few hours to live: they were sentenced last Friday: on Wednesday, to-morrow, the College must receive the list marked "executed." It is on Tuesday night that the sentences are executed. When they start calling out on Tuesday nights nobody stands by the door, nobody listens by the peep-hole; everybody is lying down in his place, pretending to be asleep. The door opens. The prisoners draw in their breath. A name is called

out, and the one being called hears but cannot credit it: he does not answer. Again there is a stern shout "Foreman! why does nobody answer, where is so and so?" They find him. "Now then, hurry up: get ready without your belongings!" Everyone in the cell tries to comfort him, but their words carry no conviction. They realize what is going to happen. Then the door opens. "Are you ready?" They go out; the door bangs. Then there is a click: they have deftly handcuffed him: he cannot escape.

On Tuesday nights it is very quiet in the prison. No shouts or screams are heard, as on the days when the sentences are being served out. All seem to be asleep, but the sighs are deep and frequent. The sleepers seem to turn over more frequently than usual. In the morning some of the faces are unrecognisable. It is almost incredible that they can change so overnight.

I remember one Wednesday (the day when I took food to my son, who was imprisoned at Boutirky) a woman had come to bring her husband a parcel. A bundle of clothes was thrust into her hands, with the words, "Comrade, take your legacy!" Like mown-down hay, without a sound, the poor woman fell to the ground. To this day the expression of her eyes haunts me.

I used to go on Thursdays to Spiridonievka 30, to see the Procurator of the Supreme Court of U.S.S.R. and plead for my son. I often noticed an old woman there who was also pleading for her 17-year-old son. On the last Thursday she was telling me hopefully that in all probability her son would soon be liberated, as on the previous Monday she had had an interview with him at Boutirky and he had told her that the official conducting the enquiry had promised him his freedom. But he had said to his mother, "You had better go to the Procurator on Thursday just the same: it might accelerate matters." Soon after I saw this woman being called before the Procurator,

and about five minutes later she was carried out and thrown on the snow in the yard. Her son had been shot on the Tuesday.

When on those Tuesday nights in the prison they were calling out their victims I imagined how at the Procurator's office or somewhere in Boutirky someone would come with a parcel for a prisoner only to learn of his fate in this way, and how they, too, would faint and be carried out and thrown on the snow like dogs.

During the Tuesdays that I spent at Boutirky countless numbers of prisoners were taken away to be shot. Hundreds were taken away from the one corridor in which I was confined. The numbers taken from all the corridors would probably run into thousands in the Boutirky prison alone. And what about Loubianka 14, the Interior Prison and all the numerous other prisons and countless dungeons of G.P.U. throughout the whole extent of U.S.S.R.? Thousands perish secretly in the Tcheka dungeons, but the world does not know of them.

*It is a crying shame that blind Europe keeps quiet and is forced against her own will by Socialistic and Communistic organisations to protest, to have strikes and mutinies for some Sacco or Vanzetti, while the Bolsheviks in Russia daily kill thousands and thousands of innocent people.*

Not a single Socialist protests against this in the whole of Europe. There are no demonstrations against it. Things are allowed to slide. Some people even smile. People speak of exaggerations, and the Socialist heads declare that they wish, at any cost, to preserve the precious germs of the "ideology" of Russian Communism, while the engine of extermination of G.P.U. continues its ghastly work and nobody seems to trouble about its victims.

When the prisoner has escaped being called out "on Tuesday" and gets off with but 3, 5 or 10 years Solovetzky or Siberia, after he has received his

sentence and while he is awaiting deportation he is transferred to what is known as the "working wing" of the prison; but during the whole term to which he has been sentenced the prisoner can never be sure of having escaped with his life. There are spies in all the cells, in the enquiries' prison and even in the "working wing."

There have been cases when the victims, who were expecting a heavier sentence and got off fairly easily, spoke of it in the cell with pleasure; many such simpletons were later taken away from the "working wing" on a Tuesday. The fact of the matter is that many tchekist-prisoners are spies, and for betraying the secrets of a sentenced man they receive a remission of their own sentence. For betraying the first one they get one-third off their sentence; for the second, half the remainder; a third ensures their liberty. In one of the cells in which I was detained there was a tchekist, a Georgian, a certain Zemaya, sentenced to three years' concentration camp. For betraying three people at the same time he was liberated within the week.

In the "working wing" all the prisoners are compelled to work, the sick as well as the hale, political prisoners as well as criminals. For instance, when the Englishman, Edward Rimington, reached the "working wing" soon after a serious operation, and when he was still almost too weak to stand on his legs, he was driven by force into the yard to saw and chop wood. That was during the hardest frost and the poor man had no warm clothes. I myself was fortunate enough to get work in the library of the prison. It was a superb library which had somehow survived from pre-revolutionary days. Among the French books of this library there are several in which very pathetic farewells have been written by means of dots under the letters (a well-known form of correspondence among prisoners). I shall quote one of them that I deciphered in Flaubert's, "La Tentation

de Saint Antoine." It read: "Tournefort, un Français, accusé d'espionage . . . condamné à mort . . . à la veille de son exécution adresse ses derniers adieux . . . à ceux qui parlent français . . . qui ont aussi le cœur français. . . . Avant de mourir, je crie,'Vive la France! Chère patrie. . . . Adieu!"

Who was this Tournefort? When was he shot? The book had been dotted further along, but some of the dots had been rubbed out, and, try as I might, I could not decipher any more.

It is my duty to convey his last farewell to those to whom he addressed it, "à ceux qui ont le cœur français." Perhaps the last words he wrote before his execution will reach those of whom he was thinking when death was near.

But let us return to the forced labour. In this wing not all prisoners work; some are told off to act as watchers over the others. These are condemned tchekists, serving their sentences. In the "working wing" the power is entirely in their hands; they all have keys to the cells and corridors. They move about freely all over the prison. The foreman of the wing is a tchekist, not elected by the prisoners, but appointed by the Governor of the prison; he was the former president of the "mestcom" (committee of the employées) in this same Boutirky prison where he is now serving his sentence. Such management of prisoners by prisoners actually creates an impression of a prison within a prison. There is another strange peculiarity: In February, 1926, one of the tchekists, a certain Mouratov (from Stavropol), serving his sentence in the Boutirky prison was appointed Governor of a new concentration camp which was being opened (the old ones are full to overflowing) in Oust-Sysolsk.

The tchekist-prisoners behave inside the prison in the same way as they do when free. At night, when the other prisoners, tired with excessive labours, are asleep, the tchekist-prisoners bring women-

prisoners from their quarters to the so-called "club," attached to the "working wing." Under the presidency of the foreman, P. S. Roumiantzev, and two other important tchekists, Hayt and Nekrassov, "the Authorities," although prisoners themselves, drink and give themselves up to all kinds of excesses. In the daytime these prisoners again become warders over the other prisoners. These, and only these tchekist-prisoners and their so-called "first corridor", are shown to foreign delegations. The other prisoners are punished for daring to speak to members of foreign delegations.

In this working wing the foreigners condemned to deportation from U.S.S.R. find themselves under particularly difficult conditions. Their trouble is not the severity of the sentence passed on them but the fact that this sentence is not carried out for such a long time. Among those who were to be deported I have known some who had already been waiting for $1\frac{1}{2}$, 2, 3 and in one case even $4\frac{1}{2}$ years after receiving their sentence. The sentence is not carried out for the simple reason that the Communists have no wish whatsoever that the foreigners should learn from their own countrymen what is taking place in U.S.S.R. In most cases people are imprisoned simply because they know too much of what is going on in the country. The other prisoners mock those condemned to deportation; they say, "We at least have got 3, 5 or 10 years and we know how long we shall be there, but in your case there is no limit."

If he has no friends or relations still enjoying their freedom who would notify the Mission in his country of his arrest, there is nobody to whom the foreigner can turn, and he simply disappears; no trace is left of him and he begins to serve his termless sentence in the Soviet prison.

His only chance seems to be to appeal to the representatives of the Political Red Cross, Mr. Winaver or Mme. Peshkov, who once a week visit

the "working wing." But the trouble is that these representatives of the Political Red Cross are brought to the "working wing" at a time when all the prisoners are turned out to work, and only those are called back from work who have a special permit from G.P.U. The conversation takes place in the presence of a tchekist, and the foreigner is warned beforehand not to be too talkative as there are "kartzers" for garrulous people. If he is cunning and remains in the cell instead of going to work and approaches the representatives without permission he is immediately led away to a "kartzer." He is not even allowed to open his mouth in order to tell the representative who he is.

There are many people who have been cut off from the world in this way and are languishing in Soviet dungeons. I, myself, had to wait more than four months for my deportation after I had received my sentence, and it is very likely that I should have been waiting still if it had not been for the very energetic interference of several foreign representatives.

My description of the Boutirky prison will, I hope, suffice to give the reader some idea of what the prisons are like, for the Boutirky is considered to be one of the best Soviet prisons.

Before closing I would like to draw particular attention to the terrible overcrowding of all the Soviet prisons in U.S.S.R. However fast the Bolsheviks open new prisons and concentration camps they are quite inadequate to accommodate the appalling number of people arrested by U.S.S.R. In the Boutirky prison fifty or more people are crammed into cells intended for 25 persons, and well over a hundred into the double cells, which are intended for 50 persons. Frequently they bring 1,500 to 2,000 newly arrested persons to the prisons in one night. At Boutirky we learned this from the ration board in the kitchen, where from every corridor four prisoners under escort went to fetch the dinners for the whole corridor. Not only the cells but even the old towers,

too, are packed with prisoners. In the Pougatchev Tower and the Northern Tower the prisoners are packed like sardines. Such mass arrests and such overcrowding of the prisons is not, of course, peculiar to Moscow. When early in April I was transferred to Petrograd (Leningrad) to Shpalernaia 2, there were 33 of us in the cell where I was, which was designed for 10 only.

Every night from the 9th to the 11th the newly arrested were brought to this prison: in all they must have numbered about 3,700 persons, of which about 1,200 were women, the majority with children. When we were removed to Pskov, the prison refused to take us in for want of accommodation. Finally our group of 6 were pushed into a single confinement cell, measuring $1\frac{1}{2}$ metres by $2\frac{1}{2}$, 6 people in a space which was too small even for a single person. They flung a handful of rotten straw on the floor for us: it was very dirty and full of insects. Such were the conditions under which we had to settle down to live in Pskov Prison.

In Ostrov we were simply not allowed inside the prison; there was not a corner available: even the governor's office and chanceries were overcrowded with prisoners. In Ostrov we had to spend the night in the Administration of the frontier G.P.U., in a kind of a hovel, where we spent the night driving away hungry and gnawing rats.

After Ostrov I was free once more, having left the "free Soviet Union."

There are many things which I have been unable to tell as to what is going on in the dungeons of this "free country," for it is difficult to compress into one chapter what could fill volumes.

Now, having completed it, having recalled the terrors seen and experienced in the O.G.P.U. dungeons, having once more lived through them in my mind, I cannot refrain from saying that in a way I am glad that the Soviet Power arrested me; for they

afforded me a unique opportunity to acquaint myself in detail with what goes on in their prisons and yet is hidden from an outside observer.

Thanks to what I saw there, I was able to satisfy myself as to the accuracy of the information I had collected while still a free man and the conclusions I formed from it about the Soviet *régime*.

The Soviet Power is based on tyranny and will perish speedily.

He who takes the sword shall perish by the sword.

# CONCLUSION

## THE WORLD REVOLUTION

An electrically illuminated map illustrating the number and influence of the Communist party in China, shown at the Exhibition of the Chinese Revolution at Moscow.

*Face page 217*]

# CHAPTER XII

## U.S.S.R. AND THE WORLD REVOLUTION

THIS ACCOUNT WOULD NOT BE COMPLETE WITHOUT some consideration of the Communistic activities of the U.S.S.R. Government beyond the limits of its own country.

The seizure of power in Russia is looked upon by the Communist dictators as the first step towards world-power, which they hope to gain by provoking Communist revolutions in other countries similar to the Russian revolution. It was for this purpose that the Soviet Government created the Third Communist International (Comintern) which masquerades as one of the People's Ministries of U.S.S.R., as one might say the "Ministry of Communist Revolution. "In order to avoid unnecessary conflicts with foreign powers, whose foundations this Soviet institution is intended to undermine, it has been made to look like something autonomous, without anything in common with the Soviet Government, which is only supposed to have given it a refuge upon Soviet territory. However clumsy this demarcation may be, however white-washed it may seem, it is astonishing that serious people should accept it, and, however sad it may be, there are ministers in Western Europe who hold in their hands the management of the foreign policies of their countries.

It would be superfluous to quote examples which are known to everyone. How can one talk of such a division or of lack of interdependence when the Communist Government itself on the one hand denies its connection with the Comintern and on

the other hand officially declares that it is "the hearth of world revolution." The president of the Soviet Republic, the chairman of the V.Z.I.K. (All-Russian Central Executive Committee) and Z.I.K. (Central Executive Committee) of U.S.S.R., Comrade M. I. Kalinin himself made the following official statement: "Nine years ago Russia, the bulwark of world reaction, was transformed into R.S.F.S.R.; later into U.S.S.R., which is *the centre of world revolution*." ("Izvestia," 7-9-26.) But having acknowledged that U.S.S.R. is "the centre of world revolution," the Bolsheviks continue their confessions; they declare that the Communist Government "steers its course" towards a world revolution. Comrade Boukharin, a member of I.K.K.I. (Executive Committee of the Communist International) and of the Politbureau, distinctly confirms this. Here are his words: "If we were asked whether the expectation of an international revolution can exist indefinitely, when we, as a country of proletarian dictatorship and Socialism, could continue to exist . . . I would answer no, because it is quite clear, that we occupy one-sixth of the world and we are still weak, whereas five-sixths are occupied by our adversaries, who are very strong, such gigantic powers as the United States, or such a great power as the British Empire. It is obvious that sooner or later the conflict is inevitable. Can we say with any certainty that we shall hold our own in such a conflict if we are not assisted by international revolution, and if the working classes of the West remain quiet? Certainly not! We have managed to exist so far largely because the working classes of all countries have been holding their bourgeoisie by the coat-tails and have prevented them from developing operations against us; on the other hand, colonial and dependent countries, such as Morocco, Syria, India, and China have caused the capitalistic society immense trouble. If all this had not been taken into account it is quite possible that

we, like our Hungarian comrades, would have failed. There can be no doubt about it. Nor can we doubt that if the international revolution, instead of progressing, subsides, then we have no guarantee that we shall not suffer great losses, that we shall not be devoured by the capitalists, that we shall not be defeated, and even, that we shall not be obliterated. "We have no such guarantee. This decides our course *towards a world revolution*. There cannot be the least argument on a point that alone insures us against an attack by the capitalists and against the fact that they will strangle us with an armed hand if they have the chance; the only guarantee against that is development of the international proletarian movement." ("Pravda," 10-1-26.)

After such a confession it must follow that "having put their money in an international revolution" the Communist Government will by all means foster its success and subsidise it through the "general staff of the world revolution" specially created for the purpose by the Comintern.

The Soviets are subsidising and organising Communistic revolutionary movements in various countries. We find proofs in England, in China, in the Dutch Indies, Austria, etc. Almost in every country the Bolsheviks have been caught red-handed on this count. Repeatedly Soviet documents, instructions and money were found; even the Soviet agent-organisers have been caught in person. (Borodin in China.) I, myself, when making a practical study of the Communist danger threatening the world, in the Communist country and abroad, have had innumerable proofs of the intimate connection and even subordination of the Comintern to the Soviet Government. Naturally this is a delicate question and I am unable to give all my information to the reader, but nevertheless some of it may be published, and I shall use it to show the interdependence which exists between the I.K.K.I. (Executive of the

Comintern) and the Soviets. First, upon whose money does the Comintern exist?—Naturally, solely upon the money of the Soviet Government. How it collects this money the reader will gather from the following example:

I had once to do all I could to protect an important foreigner on business from the arrest which was threatening him. In view of the shortness of the time at my disposal and well knowing the structure of the Soviet power, I decided not to waste time in the lower grades of its administration, such as local executive committees, but to take action immediately at the highest institution available. This took place in Rostov-on-Don, and here the highest authority was the secretary of the North Caucasian committee of the Communist party, Comrade Mikoyan, who to-day has already got the post of People's Commissary for foreign and home trades of the U.S.S.R. Comrade Mikoyan was extremely struck by my visit and asked me why I had come to him. My reply was short: "I have come to you, Comrade Mikoyan, because you are the secretary of the local committee and are a kind of viceroy in the Northern Caucasus." Comrade Mikoyan will probably remember his reply which was also a confession: "Then you are well acquainted with the structure of our power!" I did my business at that time, though I was unable to stay the proceedings which were threatening the foreigner, but, while waiting to be received by Comrade Mikoyan, I witnessed by mere chance how this "viceroy of the Caucasus" collects money for the Comintern. At the "Kraikom" (district Communist committee) it never entered anyone's head that a mere foreigner would dare to penetrate there, and, thinking that all those present were their fellow Communists, conversations and business transactions were carried on quite openly. In my presence Comrade Mikoyan demanded from the manager of the North Caucasian branch of the All-

Russian Textile Syndicate the payment of 10,000 tchervontzy (£10,000). The manager pointed out that at the time he had not got such an amount at his disposal, as of late trade had been very quiet. Comrade Mikoyan's reply was as follows: "As you like, my dear fellow, but the money must be here to-night. If it were for the ordinary levy for the all-union fund I could give you a little grace, but here I can do nothing. This, brother, is the monthly contribution *for the Comintern* and to-night, at the latest, this money must be put on the Moscow train. You know yourself that this matter cannot be delayed. To-day I have already received the second telegraph direct from Moscow to the effect that the money must be despatched to-night without fail." Interrupting his conversation with this manager, Mikoyan on the spot addressed his personal secretary, a big, stout man with a face disfigured by smallpox: "Comrade, please prepare a receipt for this money; pass it through the register of the 'Intern'."

I will confess to the reader that I was then not in any particular hurry to converse with Comrade Mikoyan and was the last to enter his presence, where, I spent more than 2½ hours in his department. On that day they were hurriedly collecting the belated contributions for the "Intern," and they were in a hurry to catch the Moscow train, and I witnessed several scenes similar to the one described above. But that scene alone suffices to form an idea of how the nationalised industries and commerce of U.S.S.R. are working for the benefit of the so-called "General Staff of the World Revolution," the Comintern.

The following experiences of my son are an interesting example of how the Communist money is distributed abroad.

In 1924, for various reasons, I advised my son, who was coming to join me in Russia, to travel via Rome.

In the course of obtaining a *visa* he met many Italian Communists, and not only discovered that the funds for the Italian Communist Party were sent by the Comintern via the Russian Embassy in Italy, but actually ascertained who the intermediaries were.

The direct representative was a Dr. Maffi, appointed by the Comintern, who was also a Communist deputy in parliament. Another intermediary was a representative of the Soviet Red Cross, a Jew named Dr. Sheftel.

Here he found these accredited representatives of the Soviet Government actually subsidising and directing an organisation *against* the Italian Government.

When my son eventually obtained his passport and started for Russia, he happened to travel with a Communist agent for Tcheckoslovakia, who was going to Russia to attend the fifth meeting of the Comintern.

This Communist agent, Paul Lento, of Racovtsy Street, Oog, told him that he had been given a special *laisser passer* by the Tckechoslovakian Russian Ambassador to attend this revolutionary meeting, and had even been provided with 250 dollars "travelling expenses" from the same source.

These events leave little doubt as to the Communist methods of conducting their revolutionary propaganda in foreign countries; but their tentacles reach everywhere. The espionage in England discovered during the raid on the "Arcos" premises; the espionage in France, in the military arsenals, discovered in connection with the case of the "elusive" Paris Communist Deputy, Comrade Creme . . . and thousands of similar facts in various countries of the world prove to us every day the work that is being done for the Soviet Government!

I myself, have proofs of such work in many countries, especially in my own country—Belgium. I have not the necessary space to adduce

them in this short chapter; besides, many of the criminals are not yet arrested and they must be allowed to work quietly until they can be finally caught. In every country the local Communists do not work independently, but follow the instructions and leadership of agents sent from U.S.S.R. They receive their policy and instructions, not from the 3rd International, but from the Politbureau. This institution is nothing more nor less than *O.G.P.U.*

O.G.P.U. possesses two departments which are working in conjunction: The K.R.O. (Intelligence) and the I.N.O. (Foreign)—*all work is being done from these two.*

In Moscow, in Loubianka, No. 2, the O.G.P.U. building, on the fifth floor is a room—No. 186. In this room, on the wall, there hangs a great map of Europe. Each country on it is covered with little flag-pins, all numbered. Each number corresponds with a district where an O.G.P.U. agent is working. *I have seen this truly "instructive" map with my own eyes.* I had an opportunity of finding out how closely this web has been spun over our Western Europe, spun by the terrible spider—Communism. I have inspected the register of the persons whom these flag-pins represent—the Communist agitators and spies.

Terror seizes me when I see how closely we in the West are entangled in this net. There are few villages, and not one city where there is not an O.G.P.U. agent represented by such a flag. In all these places information is being collected, spying is being carried out . . . the country is being undermined with propaganda . . . black lists are already being drawn up of those who shall be shot on the day of their victory. Silently, and from underground, these termites gnaw at the foundations of the existing order . . . They are preparing the road for anarchy . . . for the *Reign of Blood!*

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